DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

Richard Tuttle

Nine Stepping Stones

January 16 – March 6, 2021

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
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David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present Nine Stepping Stones, Richard Tuttle's first exhibition at the gallery and the first presentation of the artist's work in Los Angeles in nearly fifteen years.

Featuring a new group of wall-based works, this exhibition highlights the recent production of one of the most representative American artists of the postwar period. Over the past six decades, Tuttle has occupied interstitial positions between several genres, including painting, sculpture, drawing, and poetry. His work demonstrates how traditional categories of artmaking can function as starting points for wide-ranging investigations into perception and language, questioning not only how we see or experience, but also what is being seen or experienced. Such questions ultimately hinge upon how a person—whether artist or viewer or both—inhabits and makes sense of the thing that comes to be known as an artwork.

Nine Stepping Stones is dedicated to a series of assemblages whose titles all include the word "head" and whose roughly head-like proportions and shapes symbolize the human (and humanistic) frame of reference through which they can be engaged. Tuttle produced these works throughout 2020 as he recovered from Covid-19, and so they constitute, among many other things, a body of aesthetic-empirical data relating to the subjective and objective effects of the pandemic. Built from plywood—a material he has used throughout his career—which in turn becomes a support for spray-painted marks, each is a lyrical conundrum. Each head is defined by its mysteries of construction and a palpable, affirmative sense of aesthetic openness exercised within limits and expressed through humble materials.

In these works, color is nominal, i.e., existing in name, but painting is diffracted, revealing a spectrum of constituent parts that goes beyond the visual and pushes the medium into an uncharted territory. The spaces each composition conjures and occupies are both sublime and imminent, which is to say they challenge modes of ordinary perception while remaining firmly rooted in physical fact. Coming to terms with this contradiction reveals another way in which Tuttle evokes the elusively complex, if intimately familiar, things that people call heads: internalized and externalized, fixed and ephemeral, figurative and abstract, sources of language and ultimately impossible to describe in words, heads are things of the mind in every sense. Like artworks in general, and Tuttle's work in particular, they are also sites or categories in which contradictory elements coexist.

Important to note is Tuttle's use of repeated forms that nonetheless serve different functions depending on the context of the individual work. A case in point are the zig-zagging plywood

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constructions that disrupt, adorn, pierce, and open the otherwise flat surfaces of each head, hinting at hidden spaces behind, inside, and around them. Parsing these depths is an act driven in equal measure by the eye and the imagination. And while the works abound with unfinished edges, drops of glue, and other plainly evident traces of their improvisatory making—Tuttle makes no secret of the presence of his hand—they also come across as deliberately planned and conceived, with final forms that are sharp, indelible, and intentional. As a result, the exhibition is defined more than anything by its clarity, and a sense of communication and connection that are ethical in nature. As has been the case throughout his career, Tuttle achieves visual and conceptual strength not by overpowering viewers or the spaces they inhabit, but by coaxing attention back to boundless acts of seeing, thinking, and feeling that are analogues for human freedom.

Since the 1970s, Richard Tuttle (b. 1941, Rahway, New Jersey) has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at museums throughout the world, including most recently M Woods Museum, Beijing (2019); Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (2018); Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Ostend, Belgium (2017); Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru (2016); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2016); and Whitechapel Gallery and Tate Modern, London (2014). In 2005–2007, a retrospective exhibition organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art traveled to five additional institutions, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. His work is included in over sixty public collections, including those of the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Tuttle lives and works in New York and Abiquiú, New Mexico

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Richard Tuttle
Nine Stepping Stones
January 23 - March 6, 2021

Richard Tuttle
Safe Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
21 x 17 x 1 7/8 inches
(53.3 x 43.2 x 4.8 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.001)

Richard Tuttle
Women Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 1/2 x 16 x 2 1/2 inches
(57.2 x 40.6 x 6.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.005)

Richard Tuttle
Material One Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 x 16 3/8 x 2 1/8 inches
(55.9 x 41.6 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.006)

Richard Tuttle
Separate Ease Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
21 3/4 x 15 1/2 x 2 inches
(55.2 x 39.4 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.007)

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Richard Tuttle
Child Rearing Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
21 x 16 1/2 x 2 1/8 inches
(53.3 x 41.9 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.020)

Richard Tuttle
Put It In Form Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 1/4 x 16 1/2 x 2 1/8 inches
(56.5 x 41.9 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.010)

Richard Tuttle
He Said Nature Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 x 16 x 2 inches
(55.9 x 40.6 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.011)

Richard Tuttle
Sticky Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
23 1/8 x 16 3/4 x 2 inches
(58.7 x 42.5 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.012)

Richard Tuttle
What Is It About Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 x 17 1/8 x 2 1/8 inches
(55.9 x 43.5 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.013)

Richard Tuttle
The Lost People Of Asia Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
25 3/4 x 20 3/4 x 2 1/4 inches
(65.4 x 52.7 x 5.7 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.014)

Richard Tuttle
Stop For Defense Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
23 x 17 1/2 x 2 1/8 inches
(58.4 x 44.5 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.017)

Richard Tuttle
What's It About Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
24 x 20 x 2 inches
(61 x 50.8 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.018)

Richard Tuttle
Anecdotal Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 1/4 x 17 3/4 x 2 inches
(56.5 x 45.1 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.019)

Richard Tuttle
Do You Think I'm Responsible Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
24 x 18 x 2 inches
(61 x 45.7 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.021)

Richard Tuttle
Unlikely Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
25 x 18 1/2 x 2 inches
(63.5 x 47 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.022)

Richard Tuttle
Pre-Saw Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
10 1/8 x 9 1/2 x 2 3/8 inches
(25.7 x 24.1 x 6 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.023)

Richard Tuttle
Wanting Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
2 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 1 1/2 inches
(6.4 x 19.7 x 3.8 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.024)

Richard Tuttle
Here Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
6 x 5 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches
(15.2 x 14 x 4.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.025)

Richard Tuttle
Dallas Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 1/8 x 13 1/4 x 2 inches
(56.2 x 33.7 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.033)

Richard Tuttle
Sylva Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
21 x 15 1/8 x 2 inches
(53.3 x 38.4 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.027)

Richard Tuttle
I Wanna Go Through Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
18 7/8 x 15 3/4 x 2 inches
(47.9 x 40 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.030)

Richard Tuttle
Winter Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
20 1/2 x 14 3/4 x 2 inches
(52.1 x 37.5 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.028)

Richard Tuttle
Easiness And Happiness Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
21 1/8 x 15 3/4 x 1 7/8 inches
(53.7 x 40 x 4.8 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.009)

Richard Tuttle
Cracker Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 x 14 1/2 x 2 1/8 inches
(55.9 x 36.8 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.029)

Richard Tuttle
Non-Comparable Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
19 1/4 x 13 1/2 x 2 inches
(48.9 x 34.3 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.032)

Richard Tuttle
Bright Image Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
18 3/4 x 13 x 2 1/8 inches
(47.6 x 33 x 5.4 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.026)

Richard Tuttle
Decide Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
22 3/8 x 15 1/4 x 2 inches
(56.8 x 38.7 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.031)

Richard Tuttle
Light Sunning Chicken Head, 2020
plywood, spray paint, wood glue, and nails
23 1/8 x 16 3/4 x 2 inches
(58.7 x 42.5 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# RTU 20.008)

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RICHARD TUTTLE

born 1941, Rahway, New Jersey
lives and works in New York, NY and Abiquiú, NM

EDUCATION

1963 Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, BA

SELECTED SOLO / TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS
(* Indicates a publication)

2021 *Nine Stepping Stones,* David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2020 *Stories, I-XX*, Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium
TheStars, Modern Art, London, England

2019 *Days, Muses and Stars,* Pace Gallery, New York, NY
**Basis, 70s Drawings,* Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Introduction to Practice, M Woods Museum, Beijing, China
Double Corners and Colored Wood¸ Pace Gallery, Beijing, China

2018 *For Ourselves As Well As For Others*, Pace Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland
8 of Hachi, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Intersections: Richard Tuttle. It Seems Like It's Going To Be, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
Thoughts of Trees, Pace Gallery, Seoul, South Korea

2017 *100 Epigrams*, Pace Prints, New York, NY
Light and Color, Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Oostend, Belgium
Books, Multiples, Prints, Writings and New Projects, Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne, Germany
The Critical Edge, Pace London, England
My Birthday Puzzle, Modern Art, London, England
De Hallen Haarlem, Haarlem, Netherlands

2016 **Both/And Richard Tuttle Print and Cloth,* Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, Stillwater, OK

Al Cielo de Noche de Lima / To the Night Sky of Lima, Proyecto AMIL and Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru
*26, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
The Critical Edge, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Richard Tuttle: καλλίρροος _kallirroos schön-fliessend, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland

2015 *Both/And Richard Tuttle Print and Cloth,* Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA
The Recent Drawing Groups, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Both/And Richard Tuttle Print and Cloth, Fabric Workshop & Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Separation, Modern Art, London, England
Wire Pieces, Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St. Louis, MO

2014 Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, England
I Don't Know, Or The Weave of Textile Language, Whitechapel Gallery, London, England; Tate Modern, London, England
A Print Retrospective, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME
1, 2, 3, Galerie Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark
Looking for the Map, Pace Gallery, New York, NY

2013 *Matter,* Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, France
Walking in Air: An Exhibition by Richard Tuttle, TAI Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
The Thrill of the Ideal: Richard Tuttle; The Reinhart Project, Pocket Utopia, New York, NY
The Place in the Window, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Kyoto, Japan

2012 *Slide,* Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway
Werke aus Münchner Privatsammlungen, Pinakothek Munich, Munich, Germany
Systems, VIII–XII, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
"Paper", Annemarie Verna Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
Early Drawings and Sculpture, Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA

2011 *Light and Colour,* Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, England
What's the Wind, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Unpainted Paintings, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, NY

2010 *Triumphs,* Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane, Ireland
A Drawing Retrospective, Annemarie Verna, Zurich, Switzerland

New Works, Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark
"Village V", 2004, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
Metal Shoes, Dunn and Brown Contemporary, Dallas, TX
Metal Shoes, Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl, New York, NY
**Seeing Intimacy: Richard Tuttle on Paper,* Craig F. Starr Gallery, New York, NY

2009 **Renaissance Unframed 1-26,* Carolina Nitsch Project Room, New York, NY
L'nger than Life, Modern Art, London, England
Walking on Air, PaceWildenstein, New York, NY

2008 *Craft,* Annemarie Verna Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
The Use of Time, Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland

2007 *5 x 5 x 5,* Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark
Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Memory Comes from Dark Extension, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY

2006 **Half-Light Alphabet,* Galerie Ulrike Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany; Galerie Lena Bruning, Berlin, Germany
Jürgen Becker, Hamburg, Germany
Talks, Looks, Walks—Three Windows, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
*FRAC, Auvergne, France; Domaine de Kerguehennec, Bignan, France; FRAC, Haute Normandie, Sotteville les Rouen, France
Reflection; In the Pool, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
**The Kreutzer Sonata: Historical Work by Richard Tuttle*, Nyehaus and Zwirner & Wirth, New York, NY
**The Art of Richard Tuttle,* Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

2005 *Constructed Relief Paintings, 1964–65,* Peter Freeman, Inc., New York, NY
Prints 1973–2005, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
**Wire Pieces,* CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, France
Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA
Lonesome Cowboy, Griffin Contemporary, Santa Monica, CA
**The Art of Richard Tuttle,* San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**It's a Room for 3 People,* Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO

2004 *It's a Room for 3 People,* Drawing Center, New York, NY

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Dogs in a Hurry, De Kanselarij, organized by Foundation VHDG, Leewarden, Netherlands
Type, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
Neue Arbeiten, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany

2003 *Celebration, *Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Costume, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
20 Pearls, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY

2002 Dwight Hackett Projects, Santa Fe, NM
**Memento*, Museu Serralves de Arte Contemporánea, Porto, Portugal
**cENTER*¸ Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
**When We Were at Home*, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2001 **In Parts, 1998–2001*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, PA
**Werken op Papier uit de Verzameling van Museum Overholland / Works from the Museum Overholland Collection*, Kabinet Overholland, Stedelijk Museum, Stedelijk, Amsterdam
New Books and Portfolios, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA
**Perceived Obstacles*, Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Muenster, Germany; Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany

2000 **Reservations*, BAWAG Foundation, Vienna, Italy
**Perceived Obstacles*, Stiftung Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesmuseum, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, Germany
Richard Tuttle, 1981–1999, Galerie Meert Rihoux, Brussels, Belgium
White Sails, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
A/D, New York, NY
Two With Any To, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY

1999 *Die Konjunktion der Farbe*, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany
Here and Now: Richard Tuttle, in collaboration with the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, Church of Saint Paulinus, Brough Park, Catterick, England
**Replace the Abstract Picture Plane, Books and New Works,* The Kamm Collection of the Kunsthaus, A Selection by the Artist, Kunsthaus Zug,

Switzerland
New Etchings, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
**Small Sculptures of the 70s*, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Chandeliers, A/D, New York, NY
The Thinking Cap, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA
New Mexico, New York, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY

1997 *New and Early Work*, Art Gallery of York University, North York, Ontario, Canada
Symbol, Galerie Limmer, Cologne, Germany
**Projekt Sammlung: Richard Tuttle, Replace the Abstract Picture Plane, Works 1964–1996*, Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland
Renaissance Unframed 1–26, University Art Museum, California State Long Beach Art Museum, Long Beach, CA
Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
**Grey Walls Work*, Douglas Hyde Garden, Dublin, Ireland; Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland
Source of Imagery, Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
Books and Prints, New York Public Library, New York, NY

1996 **Grey Walls Work*, Camden Arts Centre, London, England
Mies van der Rohe Haus, Berlin, Germany
Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, Germany
Source of Imagery, Galleria Bonomo, Rome, Italy
Books and Prints, Widener Gallery, Trinity College, Hartford, CT
New and Early Work, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
Gold and Silver on Easy Pieces, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
**Replace the Abstract Picture Plane*, Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland
Renaissance Unframed 1–26, Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL; University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach, CA
A Chair, a Table, a Book: Richard Tuttle, Brian Kish Office for Architecture & Art, New York, NY
Galleria Eva Menzio, Turin, Italy

1995 *Source of Imagery*, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL
**Warm Brown, 1-67 and Mesa Pieces*, Kunsthalle Ritter, Klangenfurt, Austria
Europe Wired, 1–10, 1994, and Mesa Pieces, 1995, Kohn Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Time/Line, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, CA
**Selected Works, 1964–1994*, Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan

Neue Arbeiten, Galerie Fahnemann, Berlin, Germany
Anders Tornberg Gallery, Lund, Sweden
North/South Axis, Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM
Verbal Windows, Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY
Lampen, Sotel, Carin Delcourt van Krimpen, Amsterdam

1994 Texas Gallery, Houston, TX
Discontinuous Space, Burnett Miller Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
A Lamp, a Chair, a Chandelier: A Work in Process, A/D, New York, NY
Annemarie Verna Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
Galerie Meert Rihoux, Brussels, Belgium
Second Floor Exhibition Space, Reykjavik, Iceland
Galerie Jürgen Becker, Hamburg, Germany
Prints and Related Works, Brooke Alexander Editions, New York, NY
Le Temps Retrouvé, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France

1993 Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY
Drawing Works, Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, NY
Matrix: Richard Tuttle, Space/Sculpture, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, CA
Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
**Chaos, the Form*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany
Arbeiten auf Papier, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
Small…edition!, Wassermann Galerie, Munich, Germany
Floor Drawings, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IA

1992 **Oxyderood / Red Oxide*, curated by Richard Tuttle, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands
New Work, Laura Carpenter Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM
Early Drawings, Lawrence Markey Gallery, New York, NY
Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
New Work, Annemarie Verna Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
Studio la Cittá 2, Verona, Italy
Time to Do Everything—Floor Drawings and Recent Work, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
Richard Tuttle, Drawings from the Vogel Collection, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Spain

1991 *New Works,* Victoria Miro Gallery, London, England
Oboes and Clarinets, Feuerle, Cologne, Germany
Galerie Weber, Alexander, y Cobo, Madrid, Spain
Institute of Contemporary Art, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Sculptures et aquarelles, Galerie Pierre Hubert, Geneva, Switzerland
Crickets, Sala d'exposiciones de la Fundació "La Caixa," Carrer de Montcada, Barcelona
Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL

1990 *Slats 1974*, Lawrence Markey Gallery, New York, NY
Octavio for Annemarie, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Inside the Still Pure Form, BlumHelman Gallery, New York, NY
The Nature of the Gun: Richard Tuttle, A/D, New York, NY
**In Memory of Writing*, Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany
New Mexico Silver / Firenze Gold, Galleria Victoria Miro, Florence, Italy; Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
70s Drawings, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
**Einleitung*, Galeria Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany

1989 *Lonesome Cowboy Styrofoam*, Gallery Casa sin Nombre, Santa Fe, NM
The Point from the Corner of the Room, 1973–74, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
Vienna Gotico, Galeria Alessandra Bonomo, Rome, Italy

1988 *There's No Reason a Good Man is Hard to Find*, BlumHelman Warehouse, New York, NY
5 Pieces Richard Tuttle 1987, Annemarie Verna, Zurich, Switzerland
**XX Blocks*, Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
Richard Tuttle Installations: Early Works, BlumHelman Gallery, New York, NY
Galerie Meert Rihoux, Brussels, Belgium
**Portland Works*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany; Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, MA
**Space in Finland*, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany

1987 *New Work*, BlumHelman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Victoria Miro Gallery, London, England
Early & Recent Works, Anders Tornberg Gallery, Lund, Sweden
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
**Nimes au printemps*, Galerie des Arènes, Nîmes, France
**The Baroque and Color / Das Barocke und die Farbe*, Neue Galerie am

Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz, Austria
New Work, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

1986 **I See in France*, ARC Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, France
Painted Sculpture, BlumHelman Gallery, New York, NY
**Wire Pieces*, CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, France
Locus Solus IV: Richard Tuttle, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
The Spirals, Galerie Onnasch, Berlin, Germany
Richard Tuttle, New Work, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, England

1985 **Works 1964–84*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, England; Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
*Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany
**Neve / Snow*, Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
Galleria Toselli, Milan, Italy
Vienna Works, Indonesian Works, Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany

1984 *New Sculpture,* BlumHelman Gallery, New York, NY
Engineer, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, OR
Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Recent Work, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Galleria Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
16 Works from India 1980, Galleriet, Lund, Sweden
Wandobjekte, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Studio La Città, Verona, Italy

1983 *Zeichnungen 1968–1974,* Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany
Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
Recent Sculpture, BlumHelman, New York, NY
Galleria Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
Taidemariliiton Galleria, Helsinki, Finland

1982 **Pairs,* Musée de Calais, Paris, France
New Work: Richard Tuttle, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY
Gallerie Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
Nigel Greenwood Gallery, London, England

1981 Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Galerie Baronian-Lambert, Ghent, Belgium
Gallerie Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France

1980 **From 210 Collage-Drawings*, Georgia State University Art Gallery, Atlanta, GA; Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA
**12 Drahtoktogonale, 1971, und 25 Wasserfarbenblätter, 1980*, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany
Pairs 1973, Centre d'art contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland

1979 *Dallas Exercises*, Gallerie Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
**Richard Tuttle*, CAPC Centre d'Arts Plastiques Contemporaine, Bordeaux, France
Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Spoleto, Italy
An Exhibition of the Works of Richard Tuttle, College of Creative Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA
**Presentation of the Book: List of Drawing Material of Richard Tuttle and Appendices*, G. & A. Verna, R. Krauhammer, A. Gutzwiller, Zurich, Switzerland
48 ½" Center-Point Works, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
Yale Pieces, 6" x 4" Notebook, Truman Gallery, New York, NY
Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
**Title 1-6, Title I-IV, Title A-N, Title I1-I6, Titre 1-8, Titolo 1-8*, Stedelijk Museum, Stedelijk, Amsterdam

1978 Galleria Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
Zeichnungen, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Drawings, Jean Marie Antone Gallery, Annapolis, MD
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, CA
* Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, Belgium
Sticks, Françoise Lambert, Milan, Italy
David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI
An Exhibition of the Work of Richard Tuttle, College of Creative Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA
New York, Young Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL
New Work at Betty Parsons Gallery, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY

1977 *Gesamte Grafiken, Ilustrierte Bücher*, Galerie Thomas Borgmann, Cologne, Germany
Maine Works, Two with Any Two, Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd., London, England

Zwei mit Zwei / Two with Any Two, Kunstraum München, Munich, Germany
Die Gesamte Druckgraphik und alle Bücher, Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich, Germany
**New York, Zeichnungen und Aquarelle, 1968–1976*, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland
Galleria Ugo Ferranti, Rome, Italy
Undici carte de Richard Tuttle, Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
Hopkins Hall Gallery, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

1976 *Grafiek—Typologische Symmetrieen. Richard Tuttle en Maria Van Elk*, Galerie Swart, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Richard Tuttle, McIntosh Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London, England
Graeme Murray Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
The Cincinnati Pieces, Julian Pretto, New York, NY
Northwest Artists Workshop, Portland, OR
2 Days, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Books and Prints, 1964–1976, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
**Richard Tuttle,* Otis Art Institute Gallery of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, CA

1975 *Richard Tuttle "Paper Strips,"* Barbara Cusack Gallery, Houston, TX
* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Matrix 10: Richard Tuttle, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
Thirteen Spiral Drawings by Richard Tuttle, Parsons-Truman Gallery, New York, NY
D'Alessandro-Ferranti, Rome, Italy

1974 *Forty October Drawings + Interlude,* Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd. London, England
A Group of Very Small Colored Metal Plates Set at Various Distances from the Wall in the Different Rooms of the Gallery, Barbara Cusack Gallery, Houston, TX
Artpark, Lewiston State Park, Lewiston, NY
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Galleria Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy
New Works: Richard Tuttle, Galleria Toselli, Milan Italy
New Work: Richard Tuttle, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY

1973 *Drawings: Richard Tuttle*, Galleria Françoise Lambert, Milan, Italy

Ten Kinds of Memory and Memory Itself, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich, Germany
**Das 11. Papierachteck und Wandmalereien / The 11th Paper Octogonal and Paintings for the Wall*¸ Kunstraum München, Munich, Germany
Clocktower Gallery, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, NY

1972 *New Work by Richard Tuttle*, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Drahtstucke 1971–1972, Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne, Germany
Projects: Richard Tuttle with David Movros, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Richard Tuttle will show new work, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY

1971 Helman Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri, MO
**Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, TX

1970 Member's Gallery, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Neue Arbeiten von Richard Tuttle, Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne, Germany
New Work by Richard Tuttle, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY

1969 Nicholas Wilder Gallery, New York, NY

1968 *Galerie Schmela,* Düsseldorf, Germany
Ten new works by Richard Tuttle, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY

1967 Betty Parsons Gallery*,* New York, NY

1965 *Constructed Paintings*, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
(* Indicates a publication)

2019 *Messin' Around,* Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl, New York, NY

2018 *Picasso – Gorky – Warhol: Sculptures and Works on Paper, Collection*
**Hubert,* Kunsthalle Krems, Krems an der Donau, Austria; Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
In Tribute to Jack Tilton: A Selection from 35 Years, Tilton Gallery, New York, NY
Warp & Weft: A History of Fabric at Gemini G.E.L., Gemini G.E.L. at Joni

Moisant Weyl, New York, NY

2017 *Agnes Martin, Richard Tuttle: Crossing Lines,* Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Summer Days (and Summer Nights), Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Richard Tuttle, James Ensor's 'real' color, Kunstmuseum aan zee, Ostend, Belgium,
Multiple Impressions, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, TX
Summer Choices, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
**Why Draw? 500 Years of Drawings and Watercolors,* Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME
**Minimal Art from Marzona Collection,* Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London, England
**Victors for Art: Michigan's Alumni Collectors at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Part 1: Figuration,* A. Afred Taubman Gallery, the University of Michigan Museum of Art; Ann Arbor, MI
**Victors for Art: Michigan's Alumni Collectors at the University of Michigan Museum of Art,* Part 2: Abstraction, A. Afred Taubman Gallery, the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI; Irving Stenn, Jr. Family Gallery, the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI

2016 *Rhona Hoffman 40 Yeas, Part 1*, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL
I Still Believe in Miracles: Celebrating 30 Years of Inverleith House, Inverleith House, Edinburgh, Scotland
Embracing the Contemporary: The Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Shapeshifters, Luhring Augustine, New York, NY
*Pure Pulp: Contemporary Artists Working in Paper at Dieu Donné 2000–*Present,* Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY; Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking, Gerogia Tech, Atlanta, GA; The Dedalus Foundation, New York, NY
**Drawing Then: Innovation and Influence in American Drawings of the Sixties,* Dominique Lévy, New York, NY

2015 *Essential – The Line,* Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
**Drawing Redefined,* deCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA
Drawings and Prints, Selections from the Permanent Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
**Objects and Bodies at Rest and In Motion*, Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
**Richard Tuttle & Mei-mei Berssenbrugge: Hello, The Roses*, 'T' Space, Rhinebeck, New York, NY

Summer Group Show, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Space and Matter, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
Presque Rien, Galerie Marian Goodman, Paris, France
Selections from The Kramarsky Collection, David Zwirner, New York, NY
America is Hard to See, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Geometries On and Off the Grid: Art from 1950 to the Present, The Warehouse, Dallas, TX
Berman, Tuttle, Vollmer, Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, NY

2014 *Line: The Maker's Mark*, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, CA
Impulse, Reason, Sense, Conflict; Abstract Art from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, FL
De Zee – salut d'honneur Jan Hoet, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, Belgium
Space Out: Migrations to the Interior, Red Bull Studios, New York, NY
Wizz Eyelashes, Magasin III, Stockholm, Sweden
**Make it New: Abstract Painting from the National Gallery of Art, 1950–1975*, The Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA
In the Round, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Purple States & Cafe Dancer Pop-up, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
**The Annual 2014: Redefining Tradition*, National Academy Museum, New York, NY
Summer exhibition, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
**The Shaped Canvas, Revisited*, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, NY
From Picasso to Sol LeWitt: The Artist's Book since 1950, Museum Meermanno, The Hague, The Netherlands
Carte Blanche, Pace at Chesa Büsin, Zuoz, Switzerland
Dorothy and Herb Vogel: On Drawing, Fleming Museum of Art, The University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
The Age of Small Things, Dodge Gallery, New York, NY
Universal Limited Art Editions: Books, Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston, TX

2013 *40 Years at the Daniel Weinberg Gallery*, Ambach & Rice, Los Angeles, CA
Modern Drawings: Selections from the Howard Karshan Collection, The Morgan Museum & Library, New York, NY
**Re-View: Onnasch Collection*, Hauser & Wirth, London, England
Word & Work, Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, Vienna, Austria
Image and Abstraction, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Ode to Summer, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Rahway's Own, Rahway Arts District, Rahway, NJ
**When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013*, Ca' Corner della Regina, Fondazione Prada, Venice, CA

Exhibition of Newly Elected Members and Recipients of Honors and Awards, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2012 *Richard Tuttle & Mei-mei Berssenbrugge: Hello, The Roses*, Kunstverein Munich, Germany
Summer Group Show 2012, The Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Lines of Thought, Parasol Unit, London, England

2011 *Beijing Voice: Leaving Realism Behind*, The Pace Gallery, Beijing
The Language of Less (Then), Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
Picasso to Koons: Artist as Jeweler, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY
Night Scented Stock, curated by Todd Levin, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY
Fabric as Form, Tilton Gallery, New York, NY
Provisional Painting, Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, England
Unpainted Paintings, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, NY
Paper A–Z, Sue Scott Gallery, New York, NY
Contemporary Collecting: The Neisser Family Collection, Art Institute of Chicago, IL
Drawn / Taped / Burned: Abstraction on Paper, The Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY
**Splendor of Dynamic Structure: Celebrating 75 Years of the American Abstract Artists*, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

2010 **On-Line: Drawing through the Twentieth Century*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
25th Anniversary Show: 1985–2010, Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Love in Vein: Editions Fawbush projects & artists 2005–2010, Gering and López Gallery, New York, NY
**Artpark: 1974–1984*, University at Buffalo Art Gallery, Center for the Arts, Buffalo, NY
**50 Years at Pace*, The Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Thrice Upon A Time, Magasin 3, Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
Everynight, I go to Sleep, Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, England
Grass Grows By Itself, Marlborough Gallery, New York, NY
**Contemporary Collecting: Selections from the Donna and Howard Stone Collection*, Art Institute of Chicago, IL
1968, Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
\ (LEAN), Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York, NY

*Prints by Albers, Judd, Reinhardt, Ryman and Tuttl*e, Pace Prints, New York, NY
Fifty Works for Fifty States: The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

2009 *Almost*, Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, NY
Sans-Titre #1: Peintures des années 1970–1980, Œuvres de la Collection Lambert, Collection Lambert, Avignon, France
Materialien, Muenzsalon, Berlin, Germany
Zig Zag, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
A Tribute to Ron Warren, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY
Tetsumi Kudo, Richard Tuttle, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY
**Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949–78*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
Works On Paper, William Shearburn Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation
**Contemporary Drawings Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
**If We Could Imagine*, Glenstone Foundation, Potomac, MD
**Unfolding Process: Conceptual and Material Practice on Paper*, The Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
**The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
**New York/New Drawings 1946–2007*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente, Segovia, Spain

2008 *Abstract Mash-up: Anne Appleby, Pia Fries, Mary Heilmann, Sol LeWitt, Dorothy Napangardi, Laurie Reid, Amy Sillman, and Richard Tuttle*, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
15 Year Anniversary Exhibition, Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen
Summer in the City 2008, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Selections from the Collection of Helga and Walther Lauffs, Zwirner & Wirth and David Zwirner, New York, NY; Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland
**Action/Abstraction: Pollock, De Kooning, and American Art, 1940–1976*, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY
Sparks! The William T. Kemper Collection Initiative, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO
Sculpture, Texas Gallery, Houston, TX
Styrofoam, The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Air Kissing: An Exhibition of Contemporary Art About the Art World, Arcadia

University Art Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
**Collecting Collections: Highlights of the Permanent Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

2007 *Mask*, James Cohan Gallery, New York, NY
**All for Art! Great Private Collections Among Us*, Museé des beaux-arts de Montréal, Canada
Not For Sale, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY

2006 *Freeze! A Selection of Works from a New York Collection*, Ronilant + Voena + Sperone, London, England
**Nothing and Everything*, Peter Freeman, Inc., New York, NY
High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967–1975, organized by Independent Curators International, New York, NY; Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC; Katzen Arts Center, American University, Washington, D.C.; National Academy Museum, New York, NY; Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Neue Galerie Graz, Austria; ZKM/Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany
New York New York: Fifty Years of Art, Architecture, Cinema, Performance, Photography and Video, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco
Chers Amis, Domaine de Kerguehennec, Bignan, France
The Last Time They Met, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, England
Contemporary Masterworks: Saint Louis Collects, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
The Mediated Gesture, Brooke Alexander Editions and Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY

2005 *Looking at Words: The Formal Presence of Text in Modern and Contemporary Works on Paper*, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY
Greater than the Sun: Selections from the Craig Robins Collection of Contemporary Art, University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Eccentric Modern, Foundation To-Life, Inc., Mount Kisco, New York, NY
Minimalism and Beyond, Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis, MO
**Extreme Abstraction*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Drawings from the Modern: 1945–1975, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
A Little Romance: Highlights from the Permanent Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL

2004 *Beauty-in-Advertising,* curated by Richard Tuttle, Wolfsonian, Florida International University, Miami, FL

Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread, Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Design, Atlanta, GA; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO
Artists' Books: No Reading Required, Selections from the Walker Art Center Library Collection, Tribune Gallery, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, Minnesota, MN
**Indonesian Textiles,* curated by Richard Tuttle, Tai Gallery / Textile Arts, Santa Fe, NM
Transmit + Transform, Santa Fe Art Institute, Santa Fe, NM
ULAE: The Print Show, Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma City, OK
**Das MoMA in Berlin: Meisterwerke aus dem Museum of Modern Art*, New York¸ Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany

2003 *Thinking about Sculpture,* The Rachofsky House, Dallas, TX
Tony Feher, Arturo Herrera, Nancy Shaver, and Richard Tuttle, Brent Sikkema, New York, NY
Dwight Hackett Projects, Santa Fe, NM
**Assemblage,* Zwirner & Wirth, New York, NY
Primary Matters: The Minimalist Sensibility, 1959 to the Present, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA
Arp Artschwager Tuttle, Kent Gallery, New York, NY
Flirting with Rodchenko, Henry art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
American Cutout, New York Studio School, New York, NY
**The Heroic Century: Masterpieces from The Museum of Modern Art—200 Paintings and Sculptures,* Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
International Abstraction: Making Painting Real, Part II, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
In Full View, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY
Back to the Present: Minimalist Works from the Museum's Collection¸ Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI
Divergent, Galerie Lelong, New York, NY
Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Artists Books, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA
Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
Spring Fever V: Group Exhibition, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
American Academy Invitational Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2002 *The Fall Line: Intuition and Necessity in Contemporary Abstract Drawing,* Open Studio Press, Boston, MA

Works on Paper, Lawrence Markey, New York, NY
**Drawings of Choice from a New York Collection,* Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign, IL; Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR; Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA; Cincinnati Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH
netWork: Joseph Egan, James Bishop, Richard Tuttle, Jerry Zeniuk, Andreas Christen, Giulio Paolini, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Glen Rubsamen, David Rabinowitch, Robert Mangold, Rita McBride, Sol LeWitt, Dan Flavin, Fred Sandback, Donald Judd, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
**To Be Looked At: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection,* The Museum of Modern Art, Queens, NY
Watercolor: In the Abstract, Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center Gallery, Fredonia State College, Buffalo, NY

2001 *Extreme Connoisseurship,* Sert Gallery, Carpenter Center for Visual Arts and Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
The Devil is in the Details, Allston Skirt Gallery, Boston, MA
**A Century of Drawing: Works on Paper from Degas to LeWitt,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Letters, Signs and Symbols, Brooke Alexander Editions, New York, NY
**The Onnasch Collection: Aspects of Contemporary Art,* Museum d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain; Museu Serralves, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto, Portugal
**Green on Greene,* Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
**Extra Art: A Survey of Artists' Ephemera, 1960–1999,* Logan Galleries, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, London, England
**Tramas y Ensamblajas,* Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Oaxaca, Mexico
Helmut Dorner, Richard Tuttle, Franz West, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
**La Biennale di Venezia: Plateau of Humankind,* Venice, Italy
Selections from the Permanent Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL
Art Express: Art minimal et conceptual américain, ètat d'une collection, Cabinet des estampes au Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
wall>sculpture, Margarete Roeder Gallery, New York, NY
Measure/Mass: Rita McBride, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Agnes Martin, James Bishop, Joseph Egan, Robert Ryman, Fred Sandback, Richard Tuttle, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Eye of Modernism, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe, NM
Peaks, Kagan Martos Gallery, New York, NY
**Poetry Plastique,* Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY

Objective Color, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
A contretemps, FRAC Picardie, Paris, France

2000 *Brand New Prints,* Karen McCready Gallery, New York, NY
Horizon 2000: Artist Woodturners, Brookfield Craft Center, New York, NY
Soft Core, Joseph Helman Gallery, New York, NY
The Contemporary Illustrated Book: A Collaboration Between Artist and Author, 1960 to the Present, Garcia Street Books, Santa Fe, NM
Process/Reprocess: Japan and the West, Leslie Tonkonow, New York, NY
**Hard Pressed: 600 Years of Prints and Process,* AXA Gallery, New York, NY; Boise Art Museum, Boise, ID; Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM; Naples Museum of Fine Art, FL
To Infinity and Beyond: Editions for the Year 2000, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
Group Show, Grant Selwyn Fine Art, New York, NY
Da Warhol al 2000: Gian Enzo Sperone 35 anni di mostre fra Europa e America, Palazzo Cavour, Turin, Italy
**Times are Changing, Auf dem Wege! Aus dem 20. Jahrhundert!* Eine Auswahl von Werken Kunsthalle Bremen 1950–2000, Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany,
In Depth: Recent Acquisitions in Prints, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**Food for the Mind: Die Sammlung Udo und Anette Brandhorst,* Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen / Staatsgalerie moderner Kunst München, Munich, Germany
**Pintura,* FRAC Auvergne, France
The '70s at Crown Point Press and New Releases by Tom Marioni and Richard Tuttle, Crown Point Press, San Francisco, CA
Cosmologies, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
Arte Americana: Ultimo decennio, Loggetta lombardesca, Ravenna, Italy
Soft White: Lighting Design by Artists, University Gallery, Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
**2000 Biennial Exhibition,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

1999 *Size Immaterial, Department of Coins and Medals,* British Museum, London, England
Drawings from the 1960s, Curt Marcus Gallery, New York, NY
Drawings from the 1970s by Mel Bochner, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Robert Moskowitz, Fred Sandback, Richard Tuttle, Lawrence Markey, New York, NY
The Great Drawing Show, Kohn Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
**The American Century: Art and Culture 1900–2000; Part II, 1950–2000,*

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**The Rocket Four: Artist Books of the Turkey Press,* Julie Cencebaugh Gallery, New York, NY
Twenty Years of the Grenfell Press, Paul Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Mixed Bag: Summer Group Show, Schmidt Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO
Group Exhibition, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
That Certain Look: The Minimalist Tradition in New Mexico, University Art Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
Circa 1968, Museu Serralves, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto, Portugal
**White Fire, Flying Man: Amerikanische Kunst 1959–1999 in Basel,* Werke aus Öffenliche Kunstsammlung Basel und der Emanuel Hoffman-Stiftung, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland
**Afterimage: Drawing Through Process,* Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX; Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
ITINERE 2, Palazzo delle Papesse, Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena, Italy
Deutsch-amerikanischer Dialog, Galerie Fahnemann, Berlin, Germany
twistfoldlayerflake, Institute for Contemporary Arts, California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA

1998 *Next to Nothing: Minimalist Works from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery,* Anderson Gallery, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY
Art Wares, Numark Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Spatiotemporal, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Sweden
Jürgen Becker, Hamburg, Germany
Art in New Mexico, Part 1: Works by Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Susan Rothenberg, Richard Tuttle, James Kelly Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM
Sculpture, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL
Drawing the Question, Dorsky Gallery, New York, NY
**Agnes Martin / Richard Tuttle,* Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; SITE Santa Fe, NM
**The Edward R. Broida Collection: A Selection of Works,* Orlando Museum of Art, FL
Original Scale, Apex Art, New York, NY

1997 **Drawing is Another Kind of Language: Recent American Drawings from a New York Private Collection,* Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Kupferstichkabinett Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Austria; Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Kunst-Museum Ahlen, Germany; Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Fonds regional d'art contemporain de Picardie and Musée de Picardie, Amiens, France; Parrish Art Museum, Southampton,

NY; Lyman Allyn Art Museum, New London, CT; Northwestern University, Evanston, IL; Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Obsession + Devotion, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA
About Context: Eva Hesse, Roni Horn, Agnes Martin, Ree Morton, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, James Bishop, Giulio Paolini, Forrest Bess, Fred Sandback, Richard Tuttle, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
**At the Threshold of the Visible: Minuscule and Small-Scale Art, 1964–1996,* Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; Meyerhoff Galleries, Maryland Institute of Art, Baltimore; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario, Canada; Virginia Beach Center for the Arts, VA; Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA; Edmonton Art Gallery, Alberta, Canada; Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA
**Papierskulptur,* Oberösterreichisches Landsmuseum, Landsgalerie Linz, Austria
La Biennale di Venezia, 47th Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, Venice, Italy
Dan Asher, Richard Tuttle, Galerie Bismarck, Bremen, Germany
Wood Not Wood: Work Not Work, A/D, New York, NY
Works on Paper: James Bishop, Paul Feeley, Shirley Jaffe, Richard Tuttle, Lawrence Markey, New York, NY
New York on Paper, Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, D.C.
**Die Sammlung Anne-Marie und Ernst Vischer-Walder: Ein Vermächtnis,* Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Switzerland

1996 *Schwere-los Skulpturen,* Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, Landesgalerie Linz, Austria
Limited Edition Artists Books since 1990, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
West Meets East: Works on Paper, Numark Gallery, Washington, D.C
On Paper II, Schmidt Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MI
Retrospktiv II: Sol LeWitt und Richard Tuttle, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

1995 *52nd Carnegie International,* Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA
**Contemporary Drawing: Exploring the Territory,* Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO
Abstrakt, Galerie Klein, Bad Münstereifel-Mutscheid, Germany
Works on Paper, Jürgen Becker, Hamburg, Germany

1994 **Amerikanische Zeichnungen und Graphik: Von Sol LeWitt bis Bruce Nauman,* Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland
Ethereal Materialism, Apex Art, New York, NY.
Praticamente argento/Basically Silver, Studio La Città, Verona, Italy

On a Clear Day, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany
Printed in the 1970s, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
Zimmer in denen die Zeit nicht zählt: Die Sammlung Udo und Anette Brandhorst, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Öffenliche Kunstsammlung, Basel, Switzerland
From Minimal to Conceptual Art: Works from the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;Portland Museum of Art, Portland, OR; Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas, Austin, TX; Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku, Finland; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel
Evolutions in Expression: Minimalism and Post-Minimalism from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Champion Branch, Stamford, CT
Western Artists/African Art, Museum for African Art, New York, NY

1993 *Das Einfache ist das Schwierge,* Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland
The Contemporary Artist's Book: The Book as Art, 871 Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA
Sculpture & Multiples, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY

1992 *A/D at the Peter Joseph Gallery,* Peter Joseph Gallery, New York, NY
Paolo Uccello: Battaglie nell'arte del XX secolo, La Salerniana, Erice, Italy
Gifts and Acquisitions in Context, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
15th Anniversary Exhibition, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, CA
New Directions in Multiples, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT; Museum of Contemporary, Wright State University, Dayton, OH
Arte Americana, 1930–1970, Fiat-Lingotto, Turin, Italy

1991 *Drawings,* Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
Stubborn Painting: Now and Then, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Discarded, Emerson Gallery, Rockland Center for the Arts, West Nyack, New York, NY
Den Gedanken auf der Spur blieben, Museum Haus Lange and Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany
Karl August Burckhardt-Koechlin-Fonds: Zeichnungen des 20. Jahrhunderts, Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland
Essentially Raw, Sue Spaid Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA
Drawing by Sculptors, Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, MI
Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Moskowitz, Richard Tuttle, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY

Poets/Painters Collaborations, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
Ulrich Rückriem, Richard Tuttle, Remy Zaugg, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
Masterworks of Contemporary Sculpture, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY

1990 *The Garden*, A/D, New York, NY
Quotations, Part III, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
John Cage, Alan Saret, Richard Tuttle, Christine Burgin Gallery, New York, NY
Stendhal Syndrome: The Cure, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY
Accrochage, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
The New Sculpture 1965–75: Between Geometry and Gesture, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
**Concept Art, Minimal Art,* Arte Povera, Land Art: Sammlung Marzona, Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany
Group Show, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
About Round, Round About: A Collection of Circles, Spheres, & Other Round Matter, Anders Tornberg Gallery, Lund, Sweden
**Contemporary Illustrated Books: Word and Image, 1967–1988,* Franklin Furnace Archive, New York, NY; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MI; University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA
Minimal Art, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY

1989 *The Eighties in Review: Selections from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art,* Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County, Stamford, CT
The Library, A/D, New York, NY
Immaterial Objects: Works from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Albany Museum of Art, Georgia; San Jose Museum of Art, CA
Domenico Bianchi, Robert Ryman, Richard Tuttle, Sperone Westwater, New York, NY
Richard Tuttle, Michael Young, José María Sicilia, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Group Show, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Rain of Talent: Umbrella Art, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA
A/D, New York, NY
Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Alan Kirili, Richard Tuttle, William Wegman, Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, NY
Object of Thought: A Collection of Objects and Small Sculptures, Anders

Tornberg Gallery, Lund, Sweden

1988 **Three Decades: The Oliver-Hoffmann Collection,* Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
Works on Paper, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Köln sammelt: Zeitgenössiche Kunst aus Kölner Privatbesitz, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany
Black and White, Fabric Workshop, Philadelphia, PA
**From the Collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel,* Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY; Grand Rapids Art Museum, MI; Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago, IL; Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, MI; Art Museum at Florida International University, Miami, FL
Skulpturen Republik, Kunstraum Wien im Messepalast, Vienna, Austria; John Hansard Gallery, Southampton University, England
Zeichenkunst der Gegenwart: Sammlung Prinz Franz von Bayern¸ Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, Munich, Germany
Group Exhibition, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Richard Artschwager, Multiples; Dan Flavin, Sculptures; Donald Judd, Sculptures; Richard Tuttle, Objects, Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany
**Amerikkalaista nykytaidetta,* Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, Finland; Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo, Norway
Group Show, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
(C)Overt: A Series of Exhibitions, P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, NY
Source and Inspiration: A Continuing Tradition, Hirschl & Adler Folk, New York, NY

1987 **Sculptors on Paper: New Work,* Madison Art Center, Madison, WI; Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA; Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, MI; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
Seldom Seen, Genovese Graphics, Boston, MA
Beuys, Cahn, Fontana, Graubner, Lohman, Meuser, V. Nagel, Oldenburg, Polke, Saure, Scully , Tinguely, Tuttle, Twombly, Zeithamml, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Early Concepts of the Last Decade, Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, NY
**Skulptur Projekte in Münster 1987,* Westfälische Landesmuseum, Münster, Germany
Summer Group Show, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
**Jenseits des Bildes: Werke von Robert Barry, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Richard Tuttle aus der Sammlung Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, New York,* Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany

1987 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Die Gleichzeitigkeit des Andern: Materialien zu einer Austellung, Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland
1967: At the Crossroads, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, PA
Metaphor: Myron Stout, Richard Tuttle. Richard Wentworth, Win Knowlton, Kent Fine Art, New York, NY
Rauschenberg, Schwitters, Tuttle, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Selections from the Roger and Myra Davidson Collection of International Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada
White, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY

1986
Beelden in Glas / Glass Sculpture, Fort Asperen, Leerdam, the Netherlands
SkulpturSein, Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany
Esculturas sobre la pared, Galería Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid, Spain
Prospect 86, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany
Drawings from the Collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, Department of Art Galleries, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR; Moody Gallery of Art, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL; Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA
Entre la Geometría y el Gesto: Escultura Norteamericano, 1965–1975, Palacio de Velázquez, Parque del Retiro, Madrid, Spain
Wien Fluss, 1986, Wiener Secession am Steinhof-Thaterbau, Vienna, Austria

1985
Correspondences: New York Art Now, Laforet Museum Harajuku, Tokyo, Japan; Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Japan
Spuren, Skulpturen und Monumente ihrer präzisen Reise, Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland
Vom Zeichnen: Aspekte der Zeichnung 1960–1985, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany; Kasseler Kunstverein, Kassel, Germany; Museum Moderner Kunst Wien, Vienna, Austria
American Eccentric Abstraction, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Three Sculptors: John Duff, Joel Shapiro, Richard Tuttle, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
Sculptures, première approach pour un parc, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Jouy-en-Josas, France
Dreissig Jahre durch die Kunst: Museum Haus Lange, 1950–1985, Museum Haus Lange and Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany
Accrochage, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
American/European Part I: Painting Sculpture 1985, L.A. Louver, Venice, CA
Affiliations: Recent Sculpture and Its Antecedents, Whitney Museum of

American Art, Fairfield County, Stamford, CT
Dan Flavin, Morris Louis, Brice Marden, Richard Serra, Richard Tuttle: Neue Daierleihgaben aus der Sammlung Reinhard Onnach, Berlin, Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany
Wasserfarbenblatter von Joseph Beuys, Nicola De Maria, Gerhard Richter, Richard Tuttle, Westfälischer Kunstverein, Muenster, Germany
**Drawings Acquisitions: 1981–1985,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
In offener Form, Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany
Drawings by Sculptors, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
**Dracos Art Center*, Dracos Art Center, Athens, Greece
**Fortissimo: Thirty Years from the Richard Brown Baker Collection of Contemporary Art,* Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, OR

1984 **Sculptors' Drawings 1910–1980: Selections from the Permanent Collection,* Whitney Museum of American Art¸ Visual Arts Gallery, Florida International University, Miami, 1984; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO; Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, TX; Philbrook Arts Center, Tulsa, MO
In Existum Cuiusdam, Annemarie Verna Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
**Aquarelle*, Kasseler Kunstverein, Kassel, Gaermany
American Sculpture, Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Zeichnungen für die dritte Dimension (eigene Bestände), Basel Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Switzerland
Drawing by Sculptors: Two Decades of Non-Objective Art in the Seagram Collection, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada; Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia; Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, Alberta; Seagram Building, New York, NY; London Regional Art Gallery, Ontario, Canada
Painting and Sculpture Today, 1984, Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN
**The Tremaine Collection: Twentieth-Century Masters, The Spirit of Modernism*¸ Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
Forms That Function, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York

1983 **American Works on Paper: 100 Years of American Art History,* organized by Smith Kramer Art Connections, Kansas City, MO
**The First Show: Painting and Sculpture from Eight Collections 1940–1980,* Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
**15 Jahre Sammlung Helga und Walther Lauffs im Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Krefeld,* Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, Germany
Werke auf Papier / Works on Paper: James Bishop, Sol LeWitt, Robert

Mangold, Richard Tuttle, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switerland
Ars 83 Helsinki, Ateneumin taidemuseo, Helsinki, Finland
10 Jahre Kunstraum München, Jubiläumsausstellung, Kunstraum München, Munich, Germany
Minimalism to Expressionism: Paintings and Sculpture Since 1965 from the Permanent Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**Objects, Structures, Artifice,* SVC Fine Arts Gallery, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL; Center Gallery, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA
When Art Becomes Book, When Books Become Art, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Small Is Beautiful, Freedman Gallery, Albright College, Reading, PA*; Center Gallery, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA*
Drawings—Disegni—Zeichnungen I, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
Abstract Painting: 1960–1969, P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, NY

1982 *Arbeiten auf Papier,* Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
**20th Anniversary Exhibition of the Vogel Collection,* Brainerd Art Gallery, State University College of Arts and Science, Potsdam, NY; Gallery of Art, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar RapidsIA
Marilena Bonomo: Invitation à un voyage à travers l'art contemporain¸ Centre d'art contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
Ryman/Tuttle/Twombly: New Work, Blum Helman Gallery, New York, NY
Papyrus Abstractus: From Drawing to Sculpture, Town Hall Gallery, Westport, CT
**Documenta 7,* Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany
**American Painting and Sculpture: 74th Annual,* Art Institute of Chicago, IL
25 Jahre Galerie Schmela: 1957–1982, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Prints by Contemporary Sculptors, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
**'60–'80: Attitudes/Concepts/Images*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Du livre. Concurrent exhibition at: Musée des Beaux-Arts*,* Rouen, France; Bibliothèque Minicipale, Rouen, France, Galerie Déclinaisons, Rouen, France; École des Beaux-Arts, Rouen, France; C.R.D.P., Mont-Saint-Aignan, France
Artists' Photographs, Crown Point Gallery, Oakland, CA

1981 **Murs,* Centre National d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, France
IArt Materialized: Selections from the Fabric Workshop, organized by Independent Curators Incorporated, New York, New Gallery for Contemporary

Art, Cleveland, OH; Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston, SC; Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY; University of South Florida Art Galleries, Tampa, FL; Art Museum and Galleries, California State University, Long Beach, CA; Alberta College of Art Gallery, Calgary, Canada; Pensacola Museum of Art, Pensacola, FL
Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
**Amerikanische Malerei: 1930–1980,* Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany
**No Title: The Collection of Sol LeWitt,* Wesleyan University Art Gallery and Davidson Art Center, Middleton, CT
Relief(s): Richard Tuttle, Nancy Bowen, Don Hazlitt, Institut Franco-Américain, Rennes, France
**Selections from the Chase Manhattan Bank Art Collection,* University Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA; Robert Hull Fleming Museum, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT; David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI
**Drawing Acquisitions, 1978–1981,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**Drawing Distinction: American Drawings of the Seventies*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland; as Amerikanische Zeichnungen der Siebziger Jahre, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; Wihelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen, Germany
**Il limite svelato: Artista, cornice, pubblico,* Museo Civico di Torino, Mole Antonelliana, Turin, Ital
Westkunst: Zeitgenössische Kunst seit 1939, Museen der Stadt, Cologne, Germany
Heidi Glück, Joshua Neustein, David Reed, Joel Shapiro, Richard Tuttle, Bertha Urdang Gallery, New York, NY
**Vonal,* Pésci Galéria, Pécs, Hungary
**New Works of Contemporary Art and Music,* Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland

1980 *Selected Works from the Betty Parsons Gallery,* Heath Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Drawn in Space, Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C.
**Maximum Coverage: Wearables by Contemporary American Artists,* John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI; University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND
Zeichnungen" Neuerwerbungen, 1976–80, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany
**Skulptur im 20. Jahrhundert,* Wenkenpark, Riehen, Basel, Switzerland
Pier + Ocean: Construction in the Art of the Seventies, Hayward Gallery, London, England; Rijkmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands

Explorations in the '70s, Pittsburgh Plan for Art, Pittsburgh, PA
Printed Art: A View of Two Decades, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffman-Stiftung, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel, Switzerland
Art/Book/Art, organized by Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; Slusser Gallery, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Mid-Michigan Community College, Harrison, MI; Urban Institute for Contemporary Art, Grand Rapids, MI; Willard Library, Battle Creek, MI; Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson, MI

1979 *Re: Figuration,* Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY
Fabric Workshop, Marian Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
American Abstract Artists: The Language of Abstraction, Betty Parsons Gallery and Marilyn Pearl Gallery, New York, NY
New York: A Selection from the Last Ten Years, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA
Material Pleasures: The Fabric Workshop at ICA, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, PA
Pittura-Ambiente, Palazzo Reale, Milan, Itlay
1979 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Drawing and Sculpture, Adler Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Drawings About Drawings Today, The Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

1979 *Door beeldhouwer gemaakt,* Stedelijk Museum, Stedelijk, Amsterdam
Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Richard Tuttle, Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT
New Editions, Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
20th Century American Drawings: Five Years of Acquisitions¸ Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Brooke Alexander: A Decade of Print Publishing, Boston University Art Gallery, Boston, MA

1978 *Marta & Maria,* Galleria d'arte Spagnoli, Florence, Italy
Works from the Collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI
Small Objects, Whitney Museum of American Art, Downtown Branch, New York, NY
A View of a Decade, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
American Drawing, 1927–1977, Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul, MN
20th-Century American Art from Friends' Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Documenta 6, Orangerie, Kassel, Germany
Ideas in Sculpture: 1965–1977, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
1977 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Selected Works on Paper Published by Brooke Alexander, Hansen-Cowles Gallery, Minneapolis, MN.
Brooke Alexander, New York, NY

1976 **Artists' Books,* organized by the Arts Council of Great Britain, England
Soft Works of the Late Sixties, Buecker & Harpsichords, New York, NY
**100 dessins de Musée de Grenoble, 1900–1976,* Musée de Grenoble, France
**Private Notations: Artists' Sketchbooks II,* Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Torn, Folded, and Crumpled, Parsons-Dreyfuss Gallery, New York, NY
**New York in Europa,* Nationalgalerie Berlin, Germany
**American Artists: A New Decade,* Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; Fort Worth Art Museum, TX; Grand Rapids Art Museum, MI
Bis Heute: Zeichnungen für das Kunstmuseum Basel aus dem Karl A. Burckhardt-Kpechlin-Fonds, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland
**Rooms, P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources,* Long Island City, NY
Ideas on Paper 1970–1976, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Critical Perspectives in American Art, Fine Arts Center Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA; 37th La Biennale di Venezia, United States Pavilion, 1976.
**Davidson National Print and Drawing Competition,* Stowe Gallery, Davidson College, NC
**Two Hundred Years of American Sculpture,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Line, Visual Arts Museum, New York; Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia PA
**Drawing Now,* The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland; Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland; Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Switzerland; Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna, Austria; Sonja Henie-Niels Onstad *Museum*, Oslo, Norway; Tel Aviv Museum, Israel
Approaching Painting, Hallwalls, Buffalo, NY
The Book as Art, Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

1975 *Art on Paper 1975: The Weatherspoon Annual Exhibition,* University of South Carolina, Greensboro, SC

**Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture of the '60s and '70s from the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection,* Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH
**Tendances actuelles de la nouvelle peinture americaine, ARC 2,* Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, France
Recent Drawings, organized by the American Federation of the Arts, New York, NY; Traveled June 1975–December 1976
Galleria Marilena Bonimo, Bari, Italy
USA Zeichnungen 3, Städtisches Museum Schloss Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany
The Small Scale in Contemporary Art, Society for Contemporary Art and the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, IL
**Richard Brown Baker Collects! A Selection of Contemporary Art from the Richard Brown Baker Collection,* Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
Selections from the Collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, Clocktower Gallery, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, NY
Fourteen Artists, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
Abstract Watercolors: 1942–1975, Buecker & Harpsichords, New York, NY
Color. Organized by the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá; Museo de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City
**Mel Bochner, Barry Le Va, Dorothea Rockburne, Richard Tuttle,* Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH

1974 *Recent Prints,* Brooke Alexander, New York, NY
The Bay Are Collects: Sandra and Breck Caldwell, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, CA
**Painting and Sculpture Today, 1974,* Contemporary Art Society of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN; Contemporary Arts Center and Taft Museum, Cincinnati, OH
Printed, Cut, Folded, Pasted and Torn, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Works on Paper, Art Lending Service Exhibition, Penthouse Gallery, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Line as Language: Six Artists Draw, Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

1973 *Hand Colored Prints,* Brooke Alexander, New York, NY; Webb and Parsons, Bedford Village, New York, NY; Graphics I & II, Boston
Drawings, Barbara Cusack Gallery, Houston, TX

Contemporanea, Parcheggio di Villa Borghese, Rome, Italy
A Selection of American and European Paintings from the Richard Brown Baker Collection, San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
New American Graphic Art, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Of Paper, Newark Museum, Newark, NJ
American Drawings 1963–1973, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Art in Evolution, Xerox Square Exhibition Center, New York, NY
Arte come arte, Centro Comunitario de Brera, Milan, Italy
Options and Alternatives: Some Directions in Recent Art, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
Bilder, Objekte, Filme, Konzepte, Stadtische Galerie in Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany
Yngre Amerikansk Kunst: Tenginger og grafik, Gentofte Rädhus, Charlottenlund, Norway; Århus Kunstmuseum, Denmark; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter Oslo, Norway; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany; Moderna Museet, Stockholm

1972 *Small Series,* Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY
[Drawing], The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England
Actualite d'un Bilan, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Book as Artwork 1960/72, Nigel Greenwood, London, England
Documenta 5: Befragung der Realitat, Bildwelten heute, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany
Drawing in Space: 19 American Sculptors, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, NY
Amerikanische Graphik seit 1960, Bünder Kunsthaus, Chur, Switzerland; Kunstverein Solothurn, Switzerland; Musée d'art et d'historie, Geneva; Kunsthaus Aarau, Switzerland; Kunsthalle, Basel, Switzerland
Meisterwerke des 20. Jahrhunderts, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany
Recent Painting and Sculpture, Munson-Williams Proctor Institute, Utica, New York

1971 *Die Hanspeter Schulthess-Oeri-Siftung, 1961–1971,* Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland
Funf Sammler: Kunst unserer Zeit, Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany
Paintings Without Supports, Bennington College, Vermont

1970 *Paperworks, Art Lending Services, Penthouse Gallery,* The Museum of

Modern Art, New York, NY
**Die Sammlung der Emanuel Hoffman-Stiftung,* Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland
American Drawings, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Zeichnungen Amerikanischer Künstler, Galerie Ricke, Cologne, Germany
**Using Walls (Indoors),* Jewish Museum, New York, NY
New Materials: Procedures in Sculpture, Austin Arts Center, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

1969 **Art on Paper 1969: The Weatherspoon Annual Exhibition,* University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC
**Young Artists from the Collection of Charles Cowles,* Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT
Other Ideas, Detroit Institute of the Arts, Detroit, MI
**Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**Sammlung Helmet Klinker,* Städtische Kunstgalerie Bochum, Germany
*When Attitudes Become Form—Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—*Informations,* Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Germany; Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England
Soft Art, New Jersey State Museum Cultural Center, Trenton, NJ
**Thirty-First Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting,* Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
**Here & Now,* Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, MI

1968 *Some Younger American Painters and Sculptors,* organized by the American Federation of the Arts, New York, NY
American Abstract Artists: 32nd Anniversary Show, Riverside Museum, New York, NY
Anti-Form, John Gibson Gallery, New York, NY
**Betty Parsons' Private Collection,* Finch College Museum of Art, New York, NY; *Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield, MI; Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis, TN*
**Painting: Out from the Wall,* Des Moines Art Center, IA
Preview 1968, Widener Gallery, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

1966 *Contemporary American Painting: 12th Annual Exhibition,* Ralph Wilson Gallery, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA
Twentieth Anniversary, 1946–1966: Pattern Art, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY
A Selection of Contemporary American Paintings and Sculpture from the

Atheneum's Permaneny Collection, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
Twenty-Five Paintings '65, organized by Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY; *Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA; traveled to six additional venues in Virginia*
**2e Salon International de Galeries Pilates,* Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Palais de Rumine, Lausanne, Switzerland
Selections from the Art Lending Service, Penthouse Gallery, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

1965 *The Box Show*, Byron Gallery, New York, NY
Contemporary American Painting: 11th Annual Exhibition, Ralph Wilson Gallery, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA
Drawings from the Collection of Betty Parsons, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
A New York Collector Selects, Mrs. B. Tremaine, San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA
The Seventh Selection of the Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art: A New York Collector Selects, San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA

Vogel, Maria, “Richard Tuttle Asks the Viewer to Look Beyond Appearances at the Phillips Collection,” *CulturedMag.com*, October 1, 2018

CULTURED MAGAZINE

RICHARD TUTTLE ASKS THE VIEWER TO LOOK BEYOND APPEARANCES AT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

Maria Vogel | October 1, 2018

RICHARD TUTTLE EXHIBITION AT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION.

Richard Tuttle has spent the better part of the past 50 years pushing the boundaries of the contemporary art world. His distinctively minimalist artworks are as intriguing as they are perplexing. Though provoking controversy throughout his long-held career, Tuttle’s mark on the landscape continues to be felt as he introduces new modes of artistic representation into institutions around the world.

Tuttle’s latest exhibition, “It Seems Like It’s Going To Be,” finds home at The Phillips Collection as part of their *Intersections series*, where they invite old and new traditions of modern and contemporary art into the same space. The exhibition consists of 41 works which Tuttle based off a 41-verse poem which he also authored. The diverse body of work exists in conversation with works on paper by Matisse, Hepworth, Rodin, and others, that are a part of the Phillips’ permanent collection. Here, Tuttle discusses how he came to this body of work.

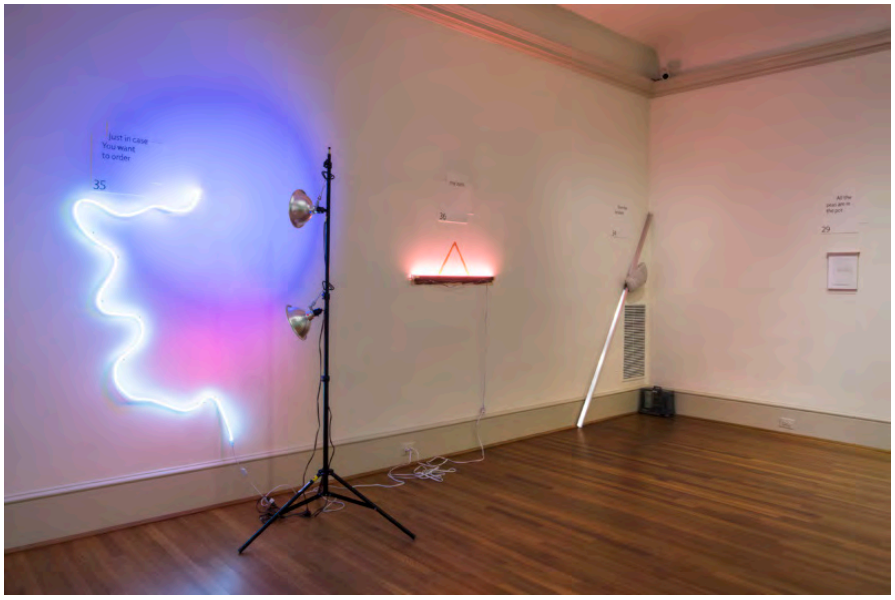
This exhibition stands as an example of your ability to constantly challenge and innovate your practice. How did the experience of creating these works differ from past exhibitions? When I was asked to prepare an exhibition, I viewed it as a clarion call for the best I could offer.

Each morning after waking I wait to hear words I call poetry. Sometimes these words make a poem quickly, sometimes it takes months. These words seem to come from the same place as my visual work, so I took a poem of 41 lines (42 days with the title), called “It Seems Like It’s Going To Be,” and tried to find an artwork in the same place the words came from—of course, somehow thinking of the exhibition spaces at the same time. This was not to prove something, or to illustrate the poem, but to see what would happen—to put visual experience, not in a privileged position, but to see, if possible, what is behind that position and why I am so committed to it.

A further complexity is working to this end in wildly different locales—New York, New Mexico, Maine—though this can give the exhibition a fractal-like cohesion and demeanor I would like to see in it.

How do you view the interconnectedness of different fields of art, such as poetry, music, and your studio practice? Art is a tool for life; every time there is art, we are closer to life.

Vogel, Maria, “Richard Tuttle Asks the Viewer to Look Beyond Appearances at the Phillips Collection,” *CulturedMag.com*, October 1, 2018



RICHARD TUTTLE EXHIBITION AT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION.

Where did the idea to pair poetry with art originate? In It Seems Like It’s Going To Be, I wanted to make one work for each verse with the ambition to completely and precisely fill the space offered (including the Phillips’s works on paper). Part of this strategy is fighting for seeing my work as a new form of realism rather than abstraction. Part is giving the visitor richer ways to address my work through the unconscious joy of looking.

How did you arrive at the works that would included in this exhibition? I remember the day in late May when we met in Washington to work. We went to art storage to look at and select drawings to include in the show, going through the complete Phillips inventory of thousands of works on paper. Drawing is something not to be known in itself, but only through going toward painting or toward line. The Phillips Collection, so outstanding in painting, like myself, would privilege “painting.” We chose 17 works on paper, happy that some treasures would be seen unusually, unexpectedly, surprisingly, even, for the first time.

The Phillips Collection’s Intersection series seeks to show work that engages with the museum’s permanent collection and architecture. How did you include these elements in your work on view? We did a walk through of the newly renovated second floor of the House, placing the 41 works, already created. An unbelievable correspondence took place, where each work—of an unusually diverse exhibition—took its place in rooms varying from re-purposed bedrooms to contemporary exhibition spaces. In addition, one had sub-themes in development, works talking with each other across divides.

Your work has often been referred to as enigmatic. Do you intentionally create mysterious, sometimes difficult-to-read work or is it merely an after-effect of your creating process? Many wonders, not foreseen, were in the unwritten charter to behold, and I am stupefied to be both its supporter and a fulfiller of its liberal promise through my art, which comes out of nowhere, lands in our world, and makes it no less than our world. That quizzical unlikelihood of all likelihoods circled Duncan Phillips’s thought, mine as well. But the work in space breaks free. This is what I want to celebrate.

How does this exhibition beckon viewers to look beyond what they are seeing? I wonder how the visitor will assimilate the lines of the poem with their visual experience. Generally, I feel the poem’s lines should be above the work as wall mounts, but in the House galleries, the ceilings are not always high enough, so side positions are sought. Certain large works are equal to very small works in having one line apiece. This pleases me enormously because language can strike us just as much softly or in gusto form, the flexibility of art and culture rarely achieved.

RICHARD TUTTLE EXHIBITION AT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION.

“The Ground and Heaven Are One: Richard Tuttle,” *MousseMagazine.it*, May 13, 2017

MOUSSE

The Ground and Heaven Are One: Richard Tuttle

The American artist shares some thoughts on his practice, textiles, a formative experience in India, and allowing the viewer the widest possible freedom.

The Critical Edge III (2015, Courtesy the artist and The Pace Gallery. Photography by Damian Griffiths

We must remember that the textile was symbolic in the counterculture of the 1960s, like long hair and smells, which went with the headbands. Now, the textile is symbolic in another way; it’s interesting how things change. Collecting makes it visible. I have a pu’a from Kalimantan made to carry heads home from battle. When it’s rolled up, its power disappears. The Balinese have a form of textile called *buboli*, which is woven so it filters out the bad spirits on your way to the temple. On some level, you can collect textiles as art. The invisible part of the world has a counterpart in the invisible part of the textile.

I am less interested in the “textile” aspect at this point, and more in that it’s a more efficient way to paint than paint. And I’m more interested in the way the eye moves from panel to panel, how one can depict infinite movement that moves off the grid, than how it holds growth and form. We may someday get used to reading this kind of writing; I really want to learn what’s possible to know from it.

I’ve been making a list recently of artists, poets, and philosophers whom I really love to love. Right now I am in Switzerland, where I installed a work of mine in a museum that is for seeing art, as opposed to looking at it. There are so many great works. I feel I have so many friends, I was humbled and grateful to be approached for this. It doesn’t matter if they are historic. One of the newest artists on the list is someone whose publishers sent him into the high Alps in 1700 to paint the glaciers, which people were too afraid to go to see themselves; the publishers made prints from his paintings. The paintings had no value for a hundred years, even though they were the first paintings to give the world the wildest nature as controlled by art.

Textiles are a kind of poetry. The ground and heaven are one. There is a fluidity between them. What can create that fluidity? Almost anyone—a crying child, the wind blowing your hair, the dust you are supposed to become one day.

During my great adventure of going to India to make textiles when I was younger, I was so sick, almost dying, and I made jewelry for me and my friend there as part of my recovery. She had beautiful ivory teeth, so I chose tiny ivory beads around the throat as the first part of a necklace. There is a photograph of me twirling three tubes of textiles that we made in Surat—actually combining, juggling, and twirling—not bad for a little boy from New Jersey, no? Especially since I learned all I know about textiles from looking at the light on a river.

Ha! That makes me laugh, for I think of panorama as a lesser art, mostly because it insults the viewer, for whom I have the highest regard. Isn’t it funny how film strips are shown horizontally when made to be vertical? Asiatic scroll painting lets you wander through the horizontal; it usually gives you a narrative element. This is not unlike *The Critical Edge*, my new show at Pace Gallery, where the viewer is free to make choices. It allows the visitor the richest possible experience of the light in darkness of which I am capable, at this time. The bonus is, it’s not supposed to be that easy, is it?

Powers, Bill, "'My Work Can Make People Say Stupid Things': A Talk With Richard Tuttle," *ARTnews.com*, May 6, 2017

ARTnews

'My Work Can Make People Say Stupid Things': A Talk With Richard Tuttle

By Bill Powers I May 6, 2017

Richard Tuttle. PHOTO BY GARY MANKUS/COURTESY PACE GALLERY

Bill Powers: You were telling me about your town house on Vandam Street.

Richard Tuttle: Aaron Burr used to live on the corner. He actually left his house here and rowed across the Hudson River for his famous duel with Alexander Hamilton. The truth of it is that both Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr are relatives of mine.

BP: That's incredible. Somebody's been on ancestry.com, huh?

RT: My brother found out. There's a book about the family.

BP: Your house looks very much the way I imagine it might have originally.

RT: I find a polarity when dealing with old houses between restoration and renovation. I'm very much of the restoration mindset.

BP: I would think that an artist might naturally lean more toward renovation, you know, in the spirit of invention.

RT: I personally have two sets of roots. I attach myself to the Betty Parsons Gallery, that generation of Abstract Expressionists. The other set of roots would be the concerns of my own generation.

BP: Is Brice Marden considered part of your generation?

RT: He's more of a Minimalist. When people talk about the 1960s as a revolutionary period my question is always, "Where's the bang?"

Yes, there were riots on campus, but in the art world the change was so subtle. The Minimalists' achievement was to give us form, to make the transition from space to form. Somebody like myself comes along and I saw my job to characterize form.

BP: So then you would be defined as a Post-Minimalist?

RT: I think I was part of a new historic cycle. In 1975–around when I had my controversial Whitney show–we switched from the experiential to the image.

BP: Which makes sense given the emergence of the Pictures Generation. Can you give me another example?

RT: Take someone like Agnes Martin, who made these grid paintings, and then she stopped. When she started painting again, it was different. The grid ones were about the experiential, the stripe ones were about image. Artists have their antennae up.

BP: Artists can have a predictive power. Almost how some people use the term speculative fiction in place of science fiction?

RT: If you really want to get it on, we can talk about speculative realism, which is taking over from the conceptual discussion. It's very much object-oriented. Now speculation has always been a part of philosophy and realism has always been a part of the world, but no one ever thought to put them together.

BP: Your show at the Whitney Museum is the one Marcia Tucker famously got fired over.

RT: But if you look at what people were actually saying, they had something totally different in their minds. Like when Hilton Kramer said less has never been less. That's not what it was about at all. My work can make people say stupid things and I've never liked that about it. There was a lot of confusion going on. I've always done things the wrong way: my work is meditative, it's quiet, it doesn't sell well.

BP: What are you up to these days?

RT: I have to give a lecture in Boulder next month, "In Praise of Islam." I've done a series of lectures. The last one was "In Praise of Puritanism." It's at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. It takes incredible research to stage these talks.

BP: Can you give me a preview?

RT: Well, one thing I find is how Western and Asian cultures are predominantly about the daytime. Correspondingly we are afraid of the night. When we put our kids to bed we say prayers over them. There's a terrible fear of the night in Christianity and Buddhism and Judaism. On the other hand, Islam loves the night, maybe because it's so hot in those countries during the day. If you read the Koran there are many revelations at night. I want people to temporarily suspend whatever issues they may have with Islam and just go for the good stuff. Look, when Islam is fused with other cultures it's inspired some of the greatest feats of humanity: the Taj Mahal, for example.

BP: Your daughter had a show at Jack Tilton gallery this year. What was that experience like for you?

RT: You should look at our refrigerator; it's covered with her reviews, announcements, and photographs.

BP: Can we pinpoint other pivotal moments in American art to explain where we find ourselves now?

RT: Since Jackson Pollock, New York art has been about one thing: recording movement makes space. And that space is a social space, a social space needed for the kind of democracy we're trying to live in. Then if you look at something like the happenings of Allan Kaprow, the person inside that space actually became art.

BP: How are people victimized by modernism?

RT: It promises that you can have an evenly lit wall when the truth is that we see much better in half-light. Modernism wants the artwork to be in a restricted time and space, which is total crap. What's the point? Art delivers its message over time.

BP: Does nature hate a straight line?

RT: Everybody operates as if there's a straight line in front of them, even in language. It's important to know that this line is an illusion, which is the essence of what Leonardo da Vinci was saying. The job of an artist is to contradict yourself.

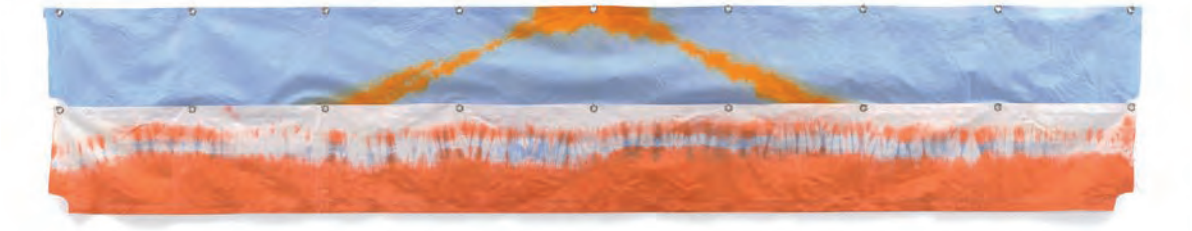
BP: Does your retrospective at Pace give you pause looking back?

RT: Suddenly I find that I want people to see my work. I guess you could call that a position I'm taking. I feel like something good happens when people see my work.

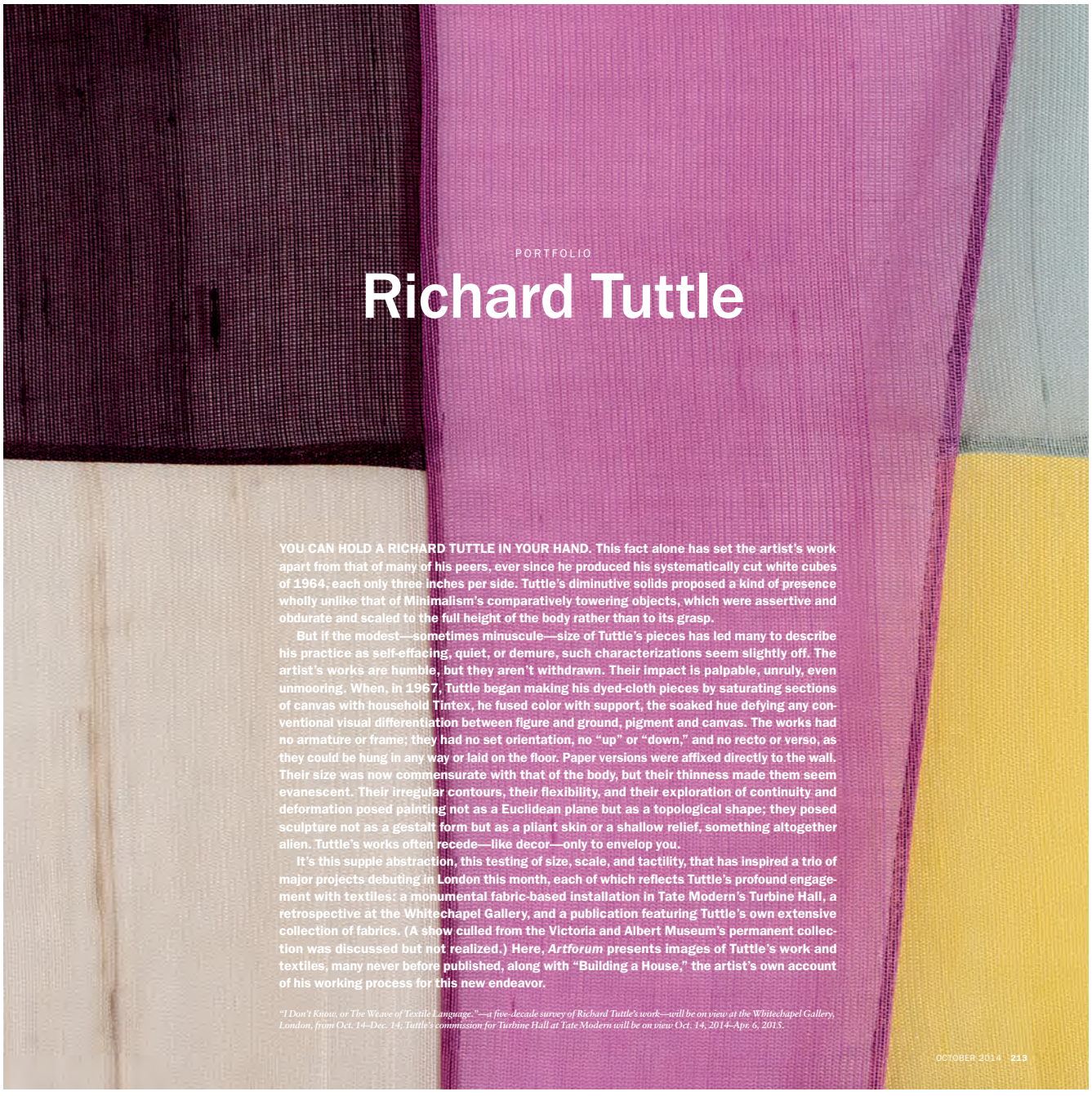
“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

This page: **Richard Tuttle, *Walking on Air, C10*, 2009,** cotton, Rit dyes, grommets, thread, 1' 11" × 10' 3".

Opposite page: **Dyed Indian bag, Korean, designed for Chinese market, early twenty-first century,** cloth. From the collection of Richard Tuttle.



“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223



PORTFOLIO

Richard Tuttle

YOU CAN HOLD A RICHARD TUTTLE IN YOUR HAND. This fact alone has set the artist's work apart from that of many of his peers, ever since he produced his systematically cut white cubes of 1964, each only three inches per side. Tuttle's diminutive solids proposed a kind of presence wholly unlike that of Minimalism's comparatively towering objects, which were assertive and obdurate and scaled to the full height of the body rather than to its grasp.

But if the modest—sometimes minuscule—size of Tuttle's pieces has led many to describe his practice as self-effacing, quiet, or demure, such characterizations seem slightly off. The artist's works are humble, but they aren't withdrawn. Their impact is palpable, unruly, even unmooring. When, in 1967, Tuttle began making his dyed-cloth pieces by saturating sections of canvas with household Tintex, he fused color with support, the soaked hue defying any conventional visual differentiation between figure and ground, pigment and canvas. The works had no armature or frame; they had no set orientation, no "up" or "down," and no recto or verso, as they could be hung in any way or laid on the floor. Paper versions were affixed directly to the wall. Their size was now commensurate with that of the body, but their thinness made them seem evanescent. Their irregular contours, their flexibility, and their exploration of continuity and deformation posed painting not as a Euclidean plane but as a topological shape; they posed sculpture not as a gestalt form but as a pliant skin or a shallow relief, something altogether alien. Tuttle's works often recede—like decor—only to envelop you.

It's this supple abstraction, this testing of size, scale, and tactility, that has inspired a trio of major projects debuting in London this month, each of which reflects Tuttle's profound engagement with textiles: a monumental fabric-based installation in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, a retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery, and a publication featuring Tuttle's own extensive collection of fabrics. (A show culled from the Victoria and Albert Museum's permanent collection was discussed but not realized.) Here, *Artforum* presents images of Tuttle's work and textiles, many never before published, along with "Building a House," the artist's own account of his working process for this new endeavor.

"I Don't Know, or The Weave of Textile Language."—a five-decade survey of Richard Tuttle's work—will be on view at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, from Oct. 14–Dec. 14; Tuttle's commission for Turbine Hall at Tate Modern will be on view Oct. 14, 2014–Apr. 6, 2015.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

This page: **Richard Tuttle, *In 14*, 1999**, acrylic, canvas, wood, 8¾ × 3¼ × 1⅜".

Opposite page: **Wedding dress, French or Italian, nineteenth century,** embroidered net. From the collection of Richard Tuttle.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

BUILDING A HOUSE

BASEMENT

If anyone knows Chris Dercon (as I’m sure many do), they know he is feisty, visionary, and hardworking, someone who can get things done, someone who works at the global scale. Among his many curatorial and directorial posts was the directorship of the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. While there, he witnessed an exhibition, “Red Oxide,” that I made with the late, great curator Alma Ruempol at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Alma called on me, a collector of pots, to enliven her collection of humble period pots, which no one would look at. When Chris became director of Tate Modern, he said he would like to do a similar show on a grand scale, focusing this time on textiles, in three London venues: the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Whitechapel Gallery, and Tate’s Turbine Hall. Because my work is known for its small size, and the Turbine Hall for its large size, some saw a fit.

Chris and I met in Ghent, Belgium, during the early 1970s. I was so moved that he liked the Rotterdam show (very ahead of its time) that I accepted his proposal, which I quickly saw was not a proposal but a vision. I saw first to define it, second to realize it, and third to make a Richard Tuttle show. Achim Borchardt-Hume was already planning my exhibition at the Whitechapel. We began negotiations with the Victoria and Albert (whose textile department is the gold standard). Since each London institution defines itself in opposition to another and they had never worked together, we had to build from the foundation up.

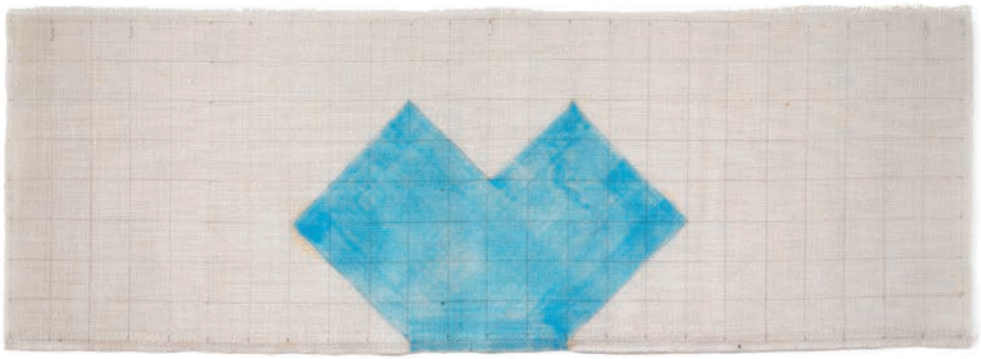
A three-part structure, using the V&A as a resource to define the textile, the Whitechapel to show its history through my work, and the Turbine Hall to make something new of it, appeared obvious for the show. Always involved with books, I ambitiously suggested making the publication a fourth exhibition. We found an excellent designer in Mark Thomson, whose catalogues have dynamic energy. Achim was made head of exhibitions at Tate Modern. Magnus af Petersens came from the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, to be chief curator at the Whitechapel. Behind the scenes was the constant support of Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate.

Almost from the start, I knew what I wanted to do for Turbine Hall. At its core, it has never changed, although all else has.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

This page: **Richard Tuttle, *Perceived Obstacle No. 72 (Oil Painting #1)*, 1991**, oil and graphite on canvas, 13¾ × 38½".

Opposite page: **Sari from Garden Silk Mills, Surat, India, early twenty-first century**, silk. From the collection of Richard Tuttle.



“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

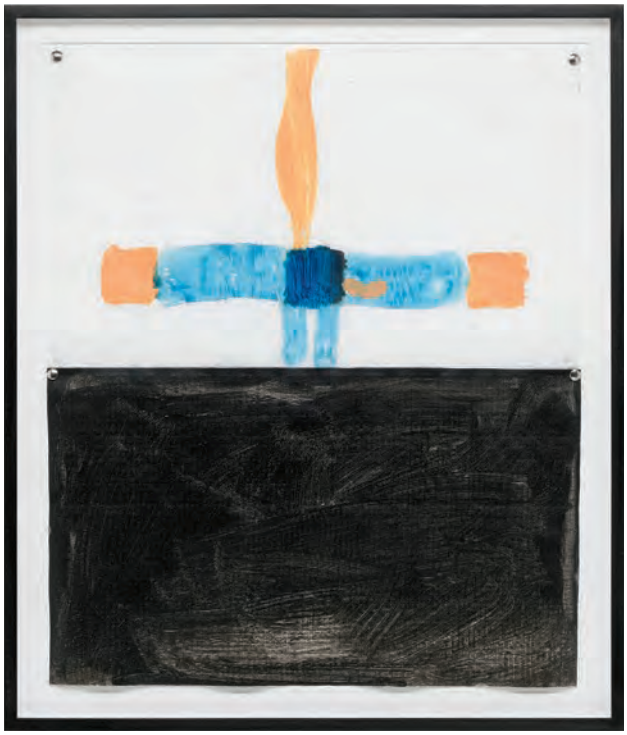
FIRST FLOOR

Magnus came to LA to visit for four days while I was at the Getty Research Institute as the artist in residence. He and I made a checklist of some twenty-two works; curiously, we made a selected list of my work in general at the same time. The Whitechapel checklist, like the idea for the Turbine Hall project, never strayed. We are using it in itself (no two textiles are used the same way or for the same purpose) and as a structure for an exhibition. This firm checklist helps those unfamiliar with my work. The thematic use of textile can be studied and pondered. I am thrilled to have my work shown in an institution I have long loved for its commitments, history, service, inspiration, and excellence. My experience, though short, reflects the original charter, written more than one hundred years ago.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

This page: **Richard Tuttle, *Space-Is-Concrete (6)*, 2005,** gesso, acrylic, and graphite on spun plastic, 24 × 20".

Opposite page: **Dutch fabric for African market, mid-twentieth century,** cotton. From the collection of Richard Tuttle.



“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

SECOND FLOOR

No models are possible. My work shall be its own model; it is not a blowup. Over the years of planning, only when the work is willing to tell me do I know and am I able to communicate to others. I have made “models,” but only for some aspect, or to show something I don’t want. Everyone has been extremely patient; like me, they are desperate, but we have to wait. In fact, the piece has grown. When it took a giant leap in size, enough to make Turbine Hall look small, I relaxed, knowing this really wants to exist.

We found an excellent project manager, Jim Leaver, who has a background in theater. He is used to listening to creative types who are not very good at articulating. He sees his job as realizing the ideas of others and does his best to bring together skilled craftspeople, from seamstresses to riggers, as well as the latest imaging systems, and fit everything into a schedule and budget. When I say to him, “Art is the first thing lost in a big project like this, and it is my job to prevent that,” he acts like he knows what I mean. When I say, “This is a game where I have all the chips and you are supposed to get half away from me,” he seems to know what I mean. When I say, “You are supposed to attach the fabric, and I to tell you how,” he stops asking.

Like all big institutions, the Tate must follow laws meant to guide and protect the public. We must fireproof. We must fumigate. All these can change the fabric as designed—harden it, densify it. We have found solutions. We are also mindful that the materials we use must be returned to circulation when we finish, and how we do that can save money. I am hoping the fabrics are so beautiful that they can be reused in fashionable clothes.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

This page: **Richard Tuttle, *Purple Octagonal*, 1967**, dyed canvas, thread, 54⅛ × 55½".

Opposite page: **Dust sheet, early twenty-first century**, felt. From the collection of Richard Tuttle.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

THE ROOF

We are looking forward to beginning to install on September 2. We have already begun to build and have seen a major section brought into the space—it looks perfect! Lighting is a major factor, not only because the work will be viewed during the dark months but because it can offer assistance. Because every molecule is operative, the many windows into Turbine Hall are considered viewing stations. But I think my favorite view will be from the floor, looking up. An ambition is to say something about perception in general, through perception of color in particular. I don’t know how to do this or how it will happen.

When I made my cloth octagonals in 1967, I saw there was a moment when color and light became one through the textile. Without getting into the intricacies of how the simple under-over, over-under structure of the textile functions in a conceal-and-reveal universe, the fact that you can spend an afternoon choosing a shirt and forget all about it when you put it on tells us that the textile may be more important than we think.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

This page: **Richard Tuttle, *Section VII, Extension 0*, 2007**, wood, acrylic paint, fabric, cardboard, aluminum wire, screws, 7 ¼ × 3½ × 4¾".

Opposite page: **Bag, Nazca culture, Peru, sixth century**, natural dyes, cotton. From the collection of Richard Tuttle.

“Portfolio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2014, pp. 212–223

CHIMNEY

I am a textile collector. Certain people picked up on the textile as significant in the new world and new values proposed by the 1960s. My great dealer friend Mary Hunt Kahlenberg focused on the products of master weavers. These are people born into every race, tribe, gender, and culture. Until I met Mary, I collected mostly Islamic; afterward, pre-Columbian, African, her favorite—Indonesian—and of course Far Eastern and Indian, too.

In trying to define the textile by the textile, we had to consider machine-made textiles and man-made fibers, somewhat outside the canon, both dominated by the male. (I was surprised that collectors of traditional textiles are mostly men, and ones who love women.) No one knows how to collect machine-made textiles. I have made books in which I collect the scraps given away for free. Textiles are now mostly made in the East; a quick walk through Walmart shows how the market connects to regional quality and character. Research meant being in contact with the big players, whether collectors, scholars, dealers, or curators in the field.

My favorite textile in my collection is a fragment from the Chavin culture in Peru. This culture is said to have domesticated cotton and to be the inventor of a writing system that lasted twenty-five hundred years, until the Aztecs. My piece is glyphs painted on cloth; you cannot imagine where the power comes from.

Neither the Whitechapel nor Turbine Hall show will change during its exhibition period. The careful observer may notice that my recent work uses fabric as paint. This ensures that the natural force of gravity will not be operative aesthetically but will, of course, occur physically.

Living with a poet is inspiring.

A new direction in my collecting is late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century American house-made fabrics, created by people who grew, prepared, spun, and wove their linen—an unthinkable degree of labor, yet the result can be art. Some of the textiles still have the names of makers embroidered on them. They stretch my eye, my mind, and exercise my touch.

Admittedly, I am what less ambitious artists call pretentious. I think Jan van Eyck found the point where the verbal and visual touch. I think Ad Reinhardt is the most important Abstract Expressionist. You can do something in art, and the deepest world shows itself through art; the artist only serves, if that. People say my work has a great range in scale, but the scale is always the same, whether big or small—that is amazing, because it says something about the nature of human creativity. Color I choose to see as open and infinite, so each body of work using color has its own definition of it.

Recent work made from pulp and mesh allows form to come from two things pulled apart, rather than pushed together—synthesis. This results from a critique of deductive reasoning, so fundamental in Western culture as to have become invisible. What tool do we have to examine ourselves but art?

Each of us is constructed in a special way, so we are good at certain things, not others. We tend to fit in, toe the line, or be aberrant. I have always had a very peculiar relation to word and image—in some ways it makes me an avatar, in others, an ignoramus. Perhaps that’s why my statements can have an enigmatic quality. □

RICHARD TUTTLE IS AN ARTIST BASED IN NEW YORK AND NEW MEXICO.

Simonini, Ross, “In The Studio: Richard Tuttle,” *Artnews.com*, *Art In America*, September 27, 2014

Art in America

IN THE STUDIO: RICHARD TUTTLE

By Ross Simonini | September 27, 2014

Portrait by Boru O’Brien O’Connell

Last spring, I spent a long, edifying Friday with Richard Tuttle in New York. In the afternoon we dined at a fine Italian restaurant in Midtown and surveyed a potential space for one of Tuttle’s future exhibitions, talking all the while. In the evening, I accompanied him on his weekly ritual at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which included eating pastries, drinking espresso, studying the map of exhibits and proceeding on a long, rambling tour through the galleries, guided by one of the great eccentric personalities of contemporary art.

Tuttle began showing his work in the mid-’60s, at the age of 24, and quickly became a significant contributor in an art scene that included artists as diverse as Robert Smithson and Agnes Martin. While some of Tuttle’s early, spare work builds upon the precedent of Minimalism, his art for the last 50 years has maintained its own curious independence: defiant of trends in contemporary culture, poetic in times dominated by austere conceptual art.

Tuttle’s quiet abstractions take the form of painting, assemblage, sculpture and drawing, often simultaneously, as if such discrete categories never occurred to him. The philosophical category of importance to Tuttle is the object. The objects he constructs have employed a host of common materials—lengths of rope and string, strips of tape, balloons, pieces of plywood, lightbulbs. One material, fabric, has been essential to his practice since his earliest exhibitions at Betty Parsons Gallery in New York, where he showed works such as crumpled, irregular octagons of dyed cloth. His show earlier this year at New York’s Pace Gallery, “Looking for the Map,” displayed an ornamental approach to fabric, which is also seen in his sartorial sensibility (at our meeting, he wore a psychedelic gold tie and a purple handkerchief tucked into his shirt pocket). The works in the Pace show served as a series of studies for a very large-scale installation that opens this month in London at Tate Modern’s Turbine Hall, filling the space with a rainbow of textiles, some made by Tuttle, some culled from international collections. The installation is accompanied by a major, five-decade retrospective of Tuttle’s work, held just a couple miles across town, at the Whitechapel Gallery. The two showings comprise one exhibition, titled “I Don’t Know or The Weave of Textile Language.”

In our conversation, Tuttle’s discussion of his work and his intentions for the dual-venue show involved frequent tangents, asides, references and exegesis. Listening to him speak can feel vertiginous and labyrinthine in a way that complements his work. Questions are rarely answered. Topics are introduced and dropped without explanation. The following is an edited version of our interview that attempts to retain the tumbling, digressive spirit of Tuttle’s speech.

ROSS SIMONINI The last time we met, you told me that you’d been trying to “hold strong to the object.” What does that mean?

RICHARD TUTTLE The object is important for looking. The eye, seeing the totality, is physical and spiritual—a lifelong development. I have a collection of glass objects. The eye is invited to go through, if it wants, or to stop. These are superb training devices. Objects can be made with embodied hands or disembodied hands. I like making things with disembodied hands.

SIMONINI What are those?

TUTTLE Our culture is anti-hand; it thinks it’s better to work with your head. Everybody aspires to go to college, so they don’t have to work with their hands, yet hands are a source of intelligence. You divorce yourself from a part of your intelligence without them. To work with disembodied hands is perfect; you have all the intelligence, but don’t submit to the sentimentality that says handmade is more valuable. The “maker’s movement” is not sentimental.

As a little kid, I saw my grandfather draw from across the room. I saw harmony between eye/brain, hand and heart/spirit; I was astonished. People say there are just as many, if not more, neurons in the heart as in the brain; people talk about neurons in the intestines. Where does intelligence come from? I have not heard anyone talking about the hand having neurons.

SIMONINI Your recent Pace show was a series of studies for the upcoming Tate installation.

TUTTLE That show made me happy and excited about the future. [Pace founder] Arne Glimcher sent me an e-mail, saying that many people came into the show as grumpy New Yorkers and left happy. The show could turn you around.

Purple Octagonal, 1967, dyed canvas and thread, 54 7/8 by 55 1/2 inches. Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, and Pace Gallery, New York.

SIMONINI How so?

TUTTLE If you made a list of great novels, symphonies and architecture, you could see the beauty of humanity, which is one of the hardest things to see right now. We’re so critical, so competitive. We blame ourselves for ruining the Earth. A theme in the Pace show was the beauty of people. Jacob Boehme, an early-Renaissance German mystic, wrote The Signature of All Things. It’s nice to pass that book on; it’s always been a kind of secret, generation after generation. His chief idea is that mystical presence exists as a signature. Every time you see something, part of what you see is the signature, which is the beauty of man. I’m taking time with this, because the last time we spoke, we discussed Plato.

SIMONINI I read the Phaedrus dialogue on your recommendation.

TUTTLE Isn’t it amazing? I’m reading the Apology. I thought recently, “The reason our ancestors began standing on their hind legs was to talk, to look in each other’s faces.” It wasn’t to pick apples. It was to be face to face, because dialogue is the glue of the social matrix. I’m also reading Sophocles. You have to read the original Greek. It’s not hard. I just do two lines a day.

SIMONINI Very slow reading.

TUTTLE That is the difference from school. If I had studied the works there, with exams, etc., they would have given me too much. I give myself one hour a day, so I’m always hungry. I can’t wait for the next 24 hours to pass.

SIMONINI How do these works connect to the London show?

TUTTLE Figuring out skin and structure, skin and bones. The key of the Turbine Hall project is scale. A seed wants to grow; it has growth potential. Sometimes I start a drawing on a piece of paper and can hardly keep it on the page.

SIMONINI Largeness isn’t something I’d associate you with. Your work is generally focused and contained, and your drawings usually deal with the center of the support.

TUTTLE One can distinguish between scale and size. Usually, we are happy with the issue of size—if it’s small, it’s small; if it’s big, it’s big. But scale is a question of the individual. Each person, everyone ever born, has a unique scale. They have it like a unique fingerprint. You can decide to find your scale. The day you find it is a day you remember. It changes your life. Your parents may determine your size, but you determine your scale. Your creative dimension allows you to create yourself in a more significant way than how you are created by your parents. Life offers each of us that possibility. It’s sad how few take it up.

SIMONINI Are you talking about proportion?

TUTTLE Human experience is a constant struggle between the real and the unreal. Every moment you are faced with trying to work out an acceptable relationship between the two. Art is almost by definition a working out of real and unreal; that is its value. The world is a place where size issues need to be worked out, and this involves all kinds of quantitative issues, which can be expressed emotionally or physically, in relationships with other people, etc. But the relations between the real and the unreal are negotiated internally, where issues of scale come in. You don’t want to waste your time looking at an artist who doesn’t know their scale. The buzz around the Turbine Hall show is because the world knows me as making artwork of small size.

In 23, 1998, acrylic, canvas and wood, 13¼ by 12½ by 2 inches. Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art and Pace Gallery. Photo Joerg Lohse.

SIMONINI Certainly.

TUTTLE The reason I can do small size is because my scale can be small. Scale contains the issue of right and wrong, the moral and the ethical. I don’t care if you kill your mother, if your ethics are right. Everyone wants their point of view to prevail, but it’s so much better to have many points of view.

SIMONINI Can you distinguish between the real and the unreal?

TUTTLE Our brains are real. Mythology feeds the brain. Our souls are not real; truth feeds soul. We need mythology the way dogs need to sniff. Their brains don’t work without sniffing. Newspapers feed us mythology.

SIMONINI Is it sort of like the difference between sensory and extrasensory?

TUTTLE Western culture defines reality as concrete. Asian culture defines reality as the absence of the concrete, as absolute nothingness. Western culture drives Asian people out of their minds, and Asian culture drives Western people out of theirs. Maybe I can contribute the next, best definition of concrete. Eastern tradition has major achievements; Western does, too. So it’s not about choosing one over the other. We have to figure out how to absorb and move on. When I speak about the real and the not real, the real is a sort of Western side. It’s a stupid, thumbnail way of speaking.

SIMONINI Is art real or unreal?

TUTTLE Art is unreal; color is real. That’s why painting is so fascinating. Color is real when you paint, but paint is not real. Paint is one of the great inventions. It can transport you from this world to the next. It’s a major thing.

SIMONINI How did the Turbine Hall show come about?

TUTTLE Chris Dercon became director of Tate Modern [in 2011]. I met Chris when he was 18. He was an intern at a gallery in the attic of an old building in Ghent.

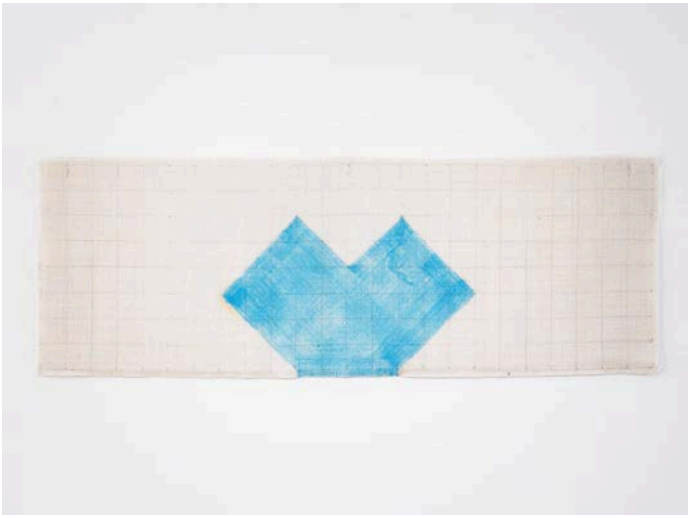
SIMONINI What work were you showing then?

TUTTLE Notebook drawings. Those just showed at the Fleming Museum at the University of Vermont in Burlington [in an exhibition of the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel collection]. The notebook drawings were an attempt to solve the problem of the artist in democracy. Marginalized, because the artist cannot subordinate personality to demos—an artist can’t really be a member. The drawings came to be about how many could be made. There were probably 7,000. I threw most of them out. When I was moving, I took some of them to the garbage. Herb Vogel came to visit. I said to him, “The garbage truck’s coming in five minutes. If you want those drawings, you can have them.” So he, being a collector, went down and got them.

SIMONINI Do you often throw out work?

TUTTLE If it’s a creative act, you can. But if it’s out of ego or intellect, you suffer a lot.

SIMONINI How does this relate to the Turbine Hall show?



Perceived Obstacle No. 72 (Oil Painting #1), 1991, oil and graphite on unstretched canvas, 13¾ by 38½ inches. Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art and Pace Gallery. Photo Kerry Ryan McFate.

TUTTLE The realized piece will be a model of itself and itself as a model; I don’t want just a blowup of a model. I’m working with a theater production manager on it. The problem is, I don’t know the stuff I need to know. What I most don’t know is how the skin is attached to the bones. As you saw in the Pace show, ambiguity between color and structure was stated quite clearly and exercised as ambiguity—that’s really hard to do. I’m thinking of the Steve Jobs biography I just read. He wound up in Silicon Valley after he went to Reed College. While at Reed, he sat in on a few calligraphy classes with Lloyd Reynolds—as did so many. That sense of design that Lloyd gave him led him into . . . I mean, we’re sitting across the street from one of the most important Apple stores. Its design comes from those simple calligraphy classes at Reed. I know other people like that—their ability to absorb is phenomenal.

SIMONINI Will you make most of the work for the Tate project beforehand?

TUTTLE We’ve already been working two and a half years. Chris Dercon was director of the Boymans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam during the time I made a show there. His strength is visionary, and I understand that my job for the Tate exhibition is (1) to understand his vision, (2) to realize it and (3) to make a Richard Tuttle show—a pretty tall order.

SIMONINI Do you feel like you’ve synthesized all of those?

TUTTLE Not yet. My dream is to be myself in public. The only way I could survive growing up was to construct a persona; it had nothing to do with me. I was a popular kid, functioned in the world, but I lived in another place.

SIMONINI Your mind was separate.

TUTTLE Yes. No one to talk to. When I came to New York I met Betty Parsons. Henri Bergson was important for her; she could say a picture is an accounting of the visible world, but it’s also an accounting of the invisible world. She knew the invisible world, and I lived in the invisible world.

Recently, I had a high school reunion. I loved all those people, and they loved me. They wanted me to come. In the end, I didn’t go. My friend called the next day. I said, “I have fought so hard to live in the world as I need to. I am never going back.”

SIMONINI I didn’t go to my reunion either.

TUTTLE My college reunion hooked me into doing a yearbook, because I had done the one for the class. I love books. I got dragged in, so I went, and everyone wanted to talk about playing Frisbee 50 years ago. These are smart leaders of America. We have inner lives; inner lives are destroyed, replaced by outer lives. My work is food for the inner life—I want someone to make something for my inner life.

The first day of kindergarten, my drawing was rejected by the teacher. Now I’ve studied a bit of child development, and I see that my drawing was at genius level, which the teacher wasn’t able to grasp. Not only did I not receive praise for a drawing that was important to me, but I was marginalized, punished. I have never trusted a teacher the rest of my life. That’s good. One of my lines is, “If Aristotle can’t be your teacher, you have to teach yourself.” When I speak at art schools, I say, “I’m not here to teach how to be an artist but to say, as best I can, what it’s like to be an artist.” They are eager to hear.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, “A Universe of Small Truths,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

by Madeleine Grynsztejn

A UNIVERSE OF SMALL TRUTHS

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself. WALLACE STEVENS, 1954[1]

To make something which looks like itself is, therefore, the problem, the solution.
RICHARD TUTTLE, 1972[2]

It seems almost unfair to attempt to characterize a body of work that has so assiduously evaded categorization for more than forty years. The relentless diversity of Richard Tuttle's art—its prolific invention and its cross-fertilization of painting, sculpture, drawing, installation, printmaking, bookmaking, and design—speaks to an unwillingness to be limited to a particular description or class that goes to the very heart of his enterprise. *Independence*—from any aesthetic or cultural stricture such as traditional media categories, conventional artistic materials, or the separation of pictorial reality from the real world—is precisely the point of Tuttle's artistic endeavor. Independence is what drives the radically ambiguous nature of his work, which is neither sculpture nor painting nor drawing, neither two- nor three-dimensional, but a vivid and always-changing combination of all of the above.

Since 1964 Tuttle has finessed an impure, indeterminate art that hovers between all manner of seeming opposites: the pictorial and the literal, matter and atmosphere, fine art and the trash heap, the blunt material fact of reality and the metaphorical phantasm of representation, the order of an integral form and the chaos of its utter dissolution, the mystical and the earthbound. Tuttle's refusal to touch down on one side or another of these dichotomies is not a matter of ambivalence or indecision—it is a matter of blithely yet willfully sustaining in his work a sense of autonomy and vitality, conditions that arise precisely from this state of being "in between." The more a work of art purposefully oscillates between taxonomic and conceptual categories, the better its chances of escaping classification altogether and thus remaining a free agent whose deepest meaning is freedom itself. In order for work such as this to be successful, however, there falls on it the burden or pressure, perhaps greater than on other works of art, to resolve its ambiguities, if not in favor of known categories, then as a self-defined, emphatic visual entity. This is what Tuttle has undertaken his entire artistic career: the invention of a particular thing or concept or "new Visual Category"[3] whose specific yet enigmatic character marks it as a unique gestalt and impresses us with its being *real*.

Look across the entire spectrum of Tuttle's work and you see a lexicon of singular invented forms that stand only for themselves, without explicit reference to a recognizable image or universal. With every work he makes, he strives to create forms that exist on a par with other unique things in the world—as definitive and self-evident as a leaf or a shadow yet not of nature.[4] These objects vaunt an inherent force and reason whose "content" derives from their own compelling features—line, shape, volume, color, and texture—and they enter the world as fully formed entities in tune with the real physical parameters of the space in which they are located. They are *characters*, in every sense of the word: works of uncanny individuality, with eccentric, self-congruent

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

traits, specific features, "personhoods," even, showing qualities of fortitude and sincerity that pertain not just to them as individuals but to Tuttle's work as a whole and to his artistic practice. I also use the word character to point to the work's declarative and emblematic qualities, the fact that it looks and acts much like a word or a visual sign within an alternative visual language.[3] Ideogrammatic in nature, Tuttle's work prompts an urge to recognition—which, however, is always and deliberately forestalled. An eloquent expanding field deliberately resistant to conventional transcription, this unclassifiable, ineffable art lies outside words. If Tuttle's works approach anything already known, it is a particular *feeling* or spirit—the animating principles of ebullience, alertness, vivacity, tenderness, and poignancy, here made concretely manifest.

What I am describing, of course, is abstract art at its best and most profound. Yet surprisingly, even though abstraction is very much a part of our daily lives, both as a long-standing art-historical practice and as a pervasive visual language in the world, it continues to pose a challenge to public reception. Generally speaking, many viewers remain distrustful of autonomous forms bearing their own commentary and proffering meaning of a different sort from that provided by mimetic representation, with its more traditional associative readings. And yet, as emphatically anti-illusionist as Tuttle's art is, does it not reveal itself completely, and with a kind of pictorial honesty and generosity that invites rather than rebuffs the viewer? To a piece, his works are effortlessly knowable in constitution—they are structurally transparent, willfully legible, and also fortified by the stuff of our own world, the distinctive and tactile properties of recognizable material, weight, and texture. These objects present themselves to us fully, and the result, if anything, is a higher rather than lesser coefficient of reality—a far cry from the elitist opacity of which abstraction is sometimes accused. Yes, the work lacks recognizable representational imagery, but in eliminating such traditional references it also and at the same time opens up an alternate mode of understanding, one less dependent on received wisdom and outside analysis and more defined by a fresh, immediate, and primary practice of observation, sensation, and symbolization—a root act of experience, if you will.

Richard Tuttle was born in 1941 and grew up in Roselle, New Jersey, the second of four children in an educated family that was comfortably well-off. Tuttle's mother came from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a center for Moravian mysticism that produced many poets, including the imagist writer H.D. (Hilda Doolittle). Poetry was ever-present in Tuttle's early life; he recalls his maternal grandmother keeping newspaper clippings of poems in her pockets. His paternal grandfather, too, loved poetry, and he gave drawing lessons to Tuttle's elder brother. In fact, he was the first person that the artist saw drawing, when Tuttle accompanied his brother to these lessons. To a boy of four or so, the wonder of a line emanating from the hand to form a recognizable image made a deep and indelible impression: "I was so struck with what was in front of my eyes...it gave me the idea that

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

there's an intelligence in the hand."[6] Tuttle's father, an engineer by profession, and his mother, a homemaker, were both children of the Great Depression, and also religious. The family can trace its paternal lineage back to an early-seventeenth-century British arrival in Massachusetts, its maternal lineage to Germany in the early eighteenth century.

Lutheran, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian faiths ran thick through the family, and these Protestant roots are not to be lightly dismissed as a backdrop for Tuttle's development. Calvinist doctrine, encompassing notions of labor, salvation as a personal responsibility, and in particular an emphasis on individual experience without the intercession of dogma or ceremony, fed Tuttle's thinking and, eventually, his artistic strategies.[7] Take his approach to material: a democratic aesthete, Tuttle sees poetic and imagistic value in all manner of things, but specifically in the kind of stuff one would normally discard: the litterings of the workspace, the remainders from studio activity, outright trash—materials that would otherwise be lost were it not for the artist salvaging them. This activity of redeeming "without the rhetoric of redemption,"[8] a central, constant aspect of Tuttle's methodology, invests worthless elements with an unexpected significance that informs the work's content. His production's prolificness—which he considers necessary for participation in a democratic society—may also recall the Protestant work ethic that posits industry as one of the foremost vehicles for salvation.

Tuttle had to look no farther than his family tree for an artistic equivalent to the idea of religion as a matter of the individual standing directly in front of God without mediation: he counts the luminist painter John Frederick Kensett among his paternal ancestors. Luminism, an indigenous and distinctly American art movement of the 1850s and 1860s, was tied to American transcendentalist philosophy and its abolition of the ego for the sake of a reconciliation with the Divine.[9] This spiritual quest had an empirical basis in the intense contemplation of "spirit in the fact,"[10] that is, in the observation of nature, particularly its lambent light (hence the palpable light that seems to emanate from these landscape canvases). Certain aspects of the luminist ethos have endured in American art, and Tuttle seems to share its impetus to achieve an unmediated, noninstitutionalized access to the manifest world. For the Luminists (conditioned as they were by the representational strategies of their day), this aspiration is evident in the quality of anonymity inherent in an "egoless" brushstroke that excises the hand of the artist. Tuttle's method is also self-effacing: no "signature style" interferes with his attempts, in making his work and in shaping the viewer's experience of it, to achieve an *a priori* free experience that permits an absolute being-there. Tuttle has made it his stated wish to get out of the way of his work,

plate 11

11 John Frederick Kensett **Shrewsbury River, New Jersey** 1859
Oil on canvas, 18 1/2 x 30 1/2 in.
Collection of the New-York Historical Society, on permanent loan from the New York Public Library

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

to "brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself."[11]

All this puts Tuttle in the tradition of American Transcendentalism, which combines equal doses of metaphysics and pragmatism in its attempt to give specific form to the immaterial. It also makes him something of a mystic. To understand Tuttle's work, one must take it whole, including the artist's attachment to the mystical in a time when there is a general shyness among the avant-garde about art that claims a spiritual role. Tuttle himself is unapologetic: "The job of the artist," he claims, "is to come up with ideas of how the mystic can be accommodated." "The main *subject* of my work," he has also said, "is this kind of perfection, it's an experience I've had, it's a kind of metaphysical, or maybe someone else could say a 'mystical' experience that's happened, say, three times or four times in my life and I would like it to happen every day and I would like to be able to make a picture or a sculpture where other people can have that experience because when you have that it also clears the mind."[12] Tuttle's work, as if to sustain in suspension the answer to the question of spirituality in a secular age, hovers between the unsentimentally material or roughly secular and the headily exalted or transcendental—precisely the location that might be described by the Hindu phrase *neti neti* ("not this, not that"), where Brahman, or the Emersonian Oversoul, or the Divine, may be located.

Tuttle's first serious face-to-face introduction to contemporary art took place in 1958; while considering colleges as a teenager he traveled to Pittsburgh and visited the Carnegie Institute of Technology and the 1958 Pittsburgh International (known today as the Carnegie International), which that year was organized by Gordon B. Washburn, one of the preeminent curatorial talents of the 1950s and 1960s. Tuttle recalls being particularly impressed with the work of Franz Kline, a key protagonist in the movement of Abstract Expressionism. The young Tuttle responded to Kline's forceful calligraphic line, even in out-scale painted form. Tuttle would have also undoubtedly noticed the scarred, sand-covered canvases of Antoni Tàpies, winner of the First Prize in Painting in 1958, thus setting into motion an early awareness of the canvas as raw material and not simply as ground for illusionistic effects. plate 12

12 Franz Kline **Siegfried** 1958
Oil on canvas, 103 x 81 1/8 in.
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.

In the end Tuttle chose to attend Trinity College, in Hartford, Connecticut, from 1959 to 1963. While the college's curriculum was conservative and offered him little of interest, he benefited from extracurricular artistic activities, designing and painting sets for theater productions and serving as editor and art editor for two editions of the college yearbook. The 1963 *Trinity Ivy*, designed by Tuttle, combined

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

plate 13

his own landscape-inspired woodcut illustrations with a poem by a fellow student, marking an early interaction of his own work with poetry and giving him his first opportunity to test the limits of book design and production.

Of critical importance to Tuttle's intellectual and artistic growth were his frequent visits to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, which had not long before hired Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr. as curator of paintings. Wagstaff and Tuttle met in Tuttle's junior year at Trinity, when the two men participated in a radio roundtable discussion on the topic of contemporary art. (Tuttle was the student representative on the panel.) Thus began a close friendship and a critical art education for Tuttle: "Weekends were spent in New York witnessing the birth of Pop and the classic period for 'Happenings' and meeting the artists of that time."[13]

Wagstaff soon introduced Tuttle to an artistic community that was quite small by today's standards but extraordinarily heterogeneous and lively. Vivid and dizzyingly contradictory directions in the arts existed simultaneously, from the newly celebrated Pop movement (which made its debut in the winter of 1962) to nascent strains of Minimalism, all of which Tuttle experienced just a few years before these impulses settled into competing dogmas and rigid polemics. This highly diversified and energetic proliferation of new forms of expression reacted against mid-century modernism's aesthetic of self-referentiality, autonomy, and subjectivity predicated on an authorial self. It pointed, by contrast, to the advent of a "youth generation" whose questioning of authority and institutional hierarchy would come to full bloom in the counterculture of the mid-1960s. In this climate of open possibilities arose "a desire for a kind of *tabula rasa* that would allow not just a new art style or movement, but new ways of conceiving of, experiencing, and distributing art."[14] Central to these new efforts, and what the many-faceted artistic experiments of the late 1950s to early 1960s held fundamentally in common (from Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Allan Kaprow to Frank Stella and the Minimalists) was a strategy of literalness that abjured metaphor and allusion in favor of an insistent materiality and formal transparency. The emerging avant-garde asserted the actual, the immediate, and the firsthand as extensions of the desire for a concrete and irreducible experience freed from history, through which one could access a bedrock of identity and certainty.[15] Reality, in its material-physiological facticity rather than its interior interpretative sense, became the touchstone for a generation of artists and intellectuals. The overturning of the preconceived and the illusionistic in favor of an oppositional emphasis on the artwork's exterior capacities became a hallmark of the most advanced art forms of the early to mid-1960s, and would stay with Tuttle throughout his life.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Tuttle also witnessed new and varied examples of artworks that deliberately sought to blur the traditional boundaries separating painting and sculpture, the second and third dimensions, and—by extension—illusion and reality. The groundbreaking nature of the project is evident in efforts to find a new nomenclature to describe its cutting-edge aesthetic—not sculpture or painting but "specific objects" (Donald Judd), "proposals" (Dan Flavin), or "structures" (Sol LeWitt).[16] These investigations into a novel pictorial-sculptural realm were being given their most serious consideration by artists of the soon-to-be-baptized movement of Minimalism, a trend to which Tuttle would have been particularly attuned given that his friend and mentor Sam Wagstaff would shortly curate what has come to be acknowledged as the first exhibition to examine the minimalist aesthetic, *Black, White, and Gray*.[17] In fact, across Tuttle's diverse and disparate oeuvre, one fundamental constant is the merging of the pictorial and the sculptural in the form of the low relief. This physical structure is visible from the start of Tuttle's artistic trajectory in the slightly raised "constructed paintings" in his first solo show of 1965. It continues on through the delicately volumetric wire works of the early 1970s and collage pieces of the late 1970s, the wall- and floor-bound assemblages of the 1980s, and in particular the shallow, layered wood constructions of the 1990s to the present.

After graduating from Trinity in the spring of 1963, Tuttle moved into a tiny studio in New York City, on East Seventh Street between First and Second avenues, and enrolled at the tuition-free Cooper Union. In the realm of young work but nevertheless instructive are early paintings such as *Four Squares* of 1964, which bears the orthogonal shapes that were the order of the day in avant-garde circles but sets them on the bias, so that they form diamond-shaped elements floating on a black ground against a white canvas. It was around this time that the twenty-two-year-old artist produced the work that marks the start of his mature artistic career, his untitled paper cubes of 1964. Tuttle created this group of palm-size cubes by variously cutting and folding sheets of cardstock in an intensive investigation of the orthogonal. Depending on the degree of perforation, the compositions run from fairly compact to very open—a strategy of variation within a repetitive modular system that would place Tuttle close enough to the minimalist camp for the paper cubes to be reproduced in Barbara Rose's 1965 article "ABC Art" in *Art in America*, one of the definitive statements codifying and consolidating the movement.[18] The delicacy of the cubes and their handmade quality distinguishes them somewhat from Minimalism as it is generally understood, and may entail a sense of expressive content; but the fact that they are hollow is squarely in keeping with minimalist tenets, and literally

plate 14

plates 1–10, 39

plate 15

13 Pages from the 1963 Trinity College yearbook, showing a woodcut illustration by Richard Tuttle

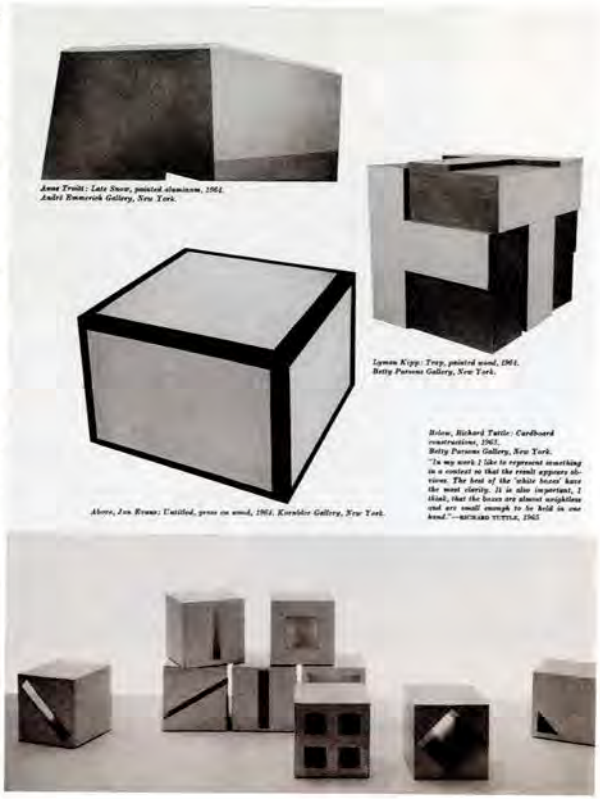
14 Richard Tuttle **Four Squares** 1964 Oil, pencil, and gouache on canvas, 18 7/8 x 16 in.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

and metaphorically excludes any notions of "interiority" that would align them with the by-then outmoded psychological model of the unified, humanist self, a concept at the center of Abstract Expressionism. Whatever interiority is made visible here is absolutely literal, not conveyed through heavily brushed metaphors for subjectivity.

Tuttle's paper cubes were precocious in evincing several characteristics that have consistently informed his work since then. There is, first of all, a delicate yet striking balance between volume and void, negative and positive space: in puncturing the cube structure to reveal its interior without disassembling any one of its planes, Tuttle created a three-dimensional work that looks as if it is made as much out of air as out of mass. This effect has become an integral element of Tuttle's repertoire, as have a disarmingly exposed structure that actively resists illusion, a daring embrace of modest size, and the use of paper (commonly a surface for drawing) as a sculptural material (as opposed to a tougher and more traditional wood or metal medium). Significantly, too, the paper cubes were meant to be held, making for an aesthetic experience that is literally firsthand, as free as possible from preconceptions or intermediaries, whether artistic, historical, or immediately physical.[19] In exploring ways of giving immediate experience a primary place in aesthetics, Tuttle, like other artists of his generation, landed on the strategy of sensory engagement, making works that privilege touch over the traditionally sovereign sense of sight and engage raw sensation ahead of detached intellect. While the paper cubes actually exercise touch, Tuttle's work would henceforth also actively recall touch—primarily by employing tactically familiar materials drawn from everyday life. This is the prime motivating factor driving his use of fabric and textiles, not only as the standard cloth support for painting but as an active compositional surface element carrying an inherently tactile coefficient that speaks directly to our bodies, allowing us to grasp the work in terms of touch as well as sight.[20]

It was at this time that Tuttle conceived the idea of becoming a pilot, an enthusiasm that led him to enlist in the United States Air Force. Immediately upon exiting the Whitehall Street Induction Center in Lower Manhattan, Tuttle—an otherwise shy young man—reached for a public phone, called the artist Agnes Martin, introduced himself, and asked if he might visit her in her studio on nearby South Street. Tuttle was in his twenties, Martin in her fifties. The younger artist respected Martin's artistic individualism: "She basically stood alone. That was a quality I admired."[21] Martin's allover gridded paintings had come into their own only a year before, in 1963. For Tuttle, what set them apart from their various affiliations—ranging from the hard-edge geometric abstractions of former Coenties Slip studio-mates Ellsworth Kelly and Jack Youngerman to works by younger Minimalists with whom she shared exhibitions—was their infusion of what Tuttle calls "a spirituality of the mind" into reductive compositions and Martin's attempt to break down visual form to its utter basics.[22]



Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Her geometric vocabulary was rooted in her desire to give form to the immaterial, and to this end she made use of elements that had no correlates in the physical world—the point and the straight line.[23] Such metaphysical aims aligned Martin with her abstract expressionist peers, even as she dispensed with their stress on heroic subjectivity, opting instead for the quieter, detached ideals of Buddhism, Taoism, and Zen, interests she shared with her gallery-mate Ad Reinhardt.

Tuttle's own personal and artistic temper disposed him toward Martin's program. During their first encounter, he bought a small drawing of hers called *Grass* (1963), a nine-by-nine-inch work on paper comprising multiple vertical and horizontal lines. "I just sensed there was something to be learned from it," the artist has said, and in fact Martin's line was of crucial interest for him. "Agnes made us able to see line for itself," he says. "She made line apparent."[24] Like Martin, Tuttle gives primacy to line as an organizing element. He sees himself as having "completed" her line through his own, the basis for his work in Postminimalism. Tuttle shares much else with this kindred spirit a generation older than he: writing on Martin in words equally appropriate to himself, he discerns an impulse to give full rein to "the nonobjective as [much] as the objective world.... What do we see then? An emotion—for example, the truth of happiness."[25] Martin's description of working "by inspiration" as opposed to "by intellect—by comparisons, calculations, schemes, concepts, ideas" could in turn apply equally well to Tuttle.[26] Both artists create images that are utterly concrete yet evocative of the most subtle abstract states. Sensing the increasingly crushing stance of a rationalist Minimalism, Tuttle found an oppositional model in the work of this aesthetic fellow traveler, and their mutually nourishing friendship continued until her death in 2004.

plate 16

Martin contributed to the development of Tuttle's artistic career in another crucial way when she introduced the young artist to Jock Truman, then director of Betty Parsons Gallery in New York. Tuttle began working for Parsons as a gallery assistant in the fall of 1964, following a twelve-week tour of duty with the U.S. Air Force that resulted in his honorable discharge. His experiences at the gallery would be fundamental and formative to his artistic evolution. Founded by Parsons in the fall of 1946, by the mid-1950s the gallery had become the leading showcase for the work of the Abstract Expressionists, whose exhibitions there changed the course of modern art.[27] When Tuttle began working at the gallery, a number of Abstract Expressionists were still frequenting it—especially Barnett Newman, a regular visitor and advisor even after he stopped exhibiting there in 1951. In a 1946 essay Newman wrote for Parsons's inaugural show, which he also curated, on Native American art of the Northwest Coast, Newman described how in such work "a shape was a living thing, a vehicle for an abstract thought-complex."[28] This comment speaks to the philosophical underpinnings of the gallery with which Tuttle would exhibit from 1965 until Parsons's death in 1982. Here art was seen as part of a fundamental, universal, and ancient human drive toward the

15 Page from the article "ABC Art" by Barbara Rose, **Art in America** magazine, October–November 1965, showing (at bottom) Richard Tuttle's **Untitled** (1964) among works by Anne Truitt,

16 Agnes Martin **Grass** 1963
Ink on paper, 9 x 9 in.
Collection of Richard Tuttle

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

independent object carrying symbolic value. "These paintings," Newman explained of his own works, "are not 'abstractions,' nor do they depict some 'pure' idea. They are specific and separate embodiments of feeling, to be experienced, each picture for itself. They contain no depictive allusions."[29] Likewise, Tuttle eschewed representation and associations in an effort to make a specific object that would prompt the experience of absolute presentness, overlaid with a metaphysical experience of being in the here and now.

Betty Parsons Gallery became a source of artistic encouragement and inspiration, "a harbor," Tuttle has said. The gallery's commitment to the intangible and intuitive aspects of art emboldened the young artist in the same direction, even as his own generation's revolt against the legacy of Abstract Expressionism was already well under way. At the time of Tuttle's contact with Newman, the older artist enjoyed high standing among a younger generation that credited him with having set the stage for Minimalism; what they ignored, however, and what Tuttle on the other hand found compelling, was the emotional content that drove the reductive material facts of Newman's pictures. To fully comprehend Tuttle's work, one must take into account his self-appointed role as something of the preserver, the last of the Betty Parsons "school" and its humanist program. He stands out among his peers for the way he consciously kept his feet in both worlds, staying close to the Parsons circle while remaining true to his own time and nature—for while his admiration for the New York School was unshakable, he could not be disposed to its generational bravura and moral absolutism.

In the manner of old-fashioned galleries, Parsons's artists socialized with one another, and as such the gallery became a social bedrock for Tuttle. There was Parsons herself, with her talent to detect "with seismographic delicacy...this quality—which for want of a better word we must call 'poetic,'"[30] to whom Tuttle turned for the wisdom that her decades-long involvement in the art world could provide. There was also Ruth Vollmer, an artist who showed with Parsons and who held a European-style salon in her Central Park West apartment, where she gathered artists, scientists, and musicians. Here Tuttle would come to know the young artists who would become his peers in Postminimalism: Mel Bochner, Eva Hesse, and Robert Smithson. Interestingly, however, Tuttle was not part of any studio community—still in learning mode, he sought out not like-minded artists but "eyes": "The most important is to find someone who has good eyes. Someone who can see."[31] His circle of mentors past and present includes not only Wagstaff, Martin, and Parsons, but also the decorative-arts dealer John Gordon, whose gallery was located across from Parsons's and who imbued in Tuttle the belief that an object anchors the ineffable values of a larger culture; Washburn, who as director of Asia House Gallery hired Tuttle as an exhibition installer, thus facilitating the artist's first direct contact with exceptional examples of Asian art and initiating his lifelong engagement with Eastern aesthetics and metaphysics; and, particularly since 1970, collector Herbert Vogel, whom Tuttle regards as his most important extra set of "eyes that can see."

On his return to New York from his military tour of duty, Tuttle had found a new place to work on Eighth Avenue between Twenty-first and Twenty-second streets. It was in this studio that he began to make his constructed paintings.[32] Initially these consisted of canvas sewn

plates 40–54, 292

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

over shaped, dimensional wood constructions that merged painting and sculpture, in terms of both their material fabrication and their siting—hung on the wall as often as laid on the floor. Tuttle soon dispensed with the canvas overlay in a series of wall reliefs and floor sculptures made from wood and painted in off-key, uniform matte monochromes. To produce these works—some of which required nearly twenty coats to achieve the right color—he used a rough-bristle brush and a dry, unostentatious paint application that he shared not only with Parsons artists Reinhardt and Newman, but also with such generational cohorts as Stella, LeWitt, and Judd. The bare-bones, workmanlike quality of the painted surface had the effect of displacing attention away from the piece's pictorial qualities and toward its rimmed sculptural form. Significantly, the genesis of the constructed paintings lies in drawing: each shape was first rendered on paper and adjusted several times over until the desired image was reached; it was then transferred to a doubled paper template from which two identical shapes were cut out of thin sheets of wood using a fretsaw. These shapes were joined by a strip of wood, from one to three inches thick, that accurately followed the contour of the edges, giving the work a literal if shallow material presence that physically projected into space once installed. The hollow form of each piece was hammered together using countless nails in a time-consuming process that placed deliberate emphasis on the constructed nature of the works. The term *constructed paintings* calls attention to the fact that these breakthrough pieces are handmade and emphatically material. Inherent in the fact of their having been built is the message that each is a truly invented form—"above all *that shape*."[33]

I quote Judd here because it is worth exploring how Tuttle's work at this time both overlapped with and diverged from minimalist tenets. Tuttle's constructed paintings, in their actual thickness and their uniquely articulated profiles, work like minimalist objects to create convincing unitary forms, or gestalts.[34] Even when, as in *Chelsea*, the floor-based *Fountain*, or *Drift III* (all 1965), the works are made up of multiple components, they are nevertheless conjoined in such a way as to convey a convincing "wholeness" that "occurs all at once" (to use key Judd terminology).[35] Judd's seminal text "Specific Objects" was published in the same year that Tuttle's constructed paintings were first exhibited. Passages from this essay strike one as tight descriptions of Tuttle's own "new three-dimensional work":

> *The best new work in the last few years has been neither painting nor sculpture. Usually it has been related, closely or distantly, to one or the other.... Much of the motivation in the new work is to get clear of these forms.... The new work obviously resembles sculpture more than it does painting, but it is nearer to painting.... In the new work the shape, image, colour and surface are single and not partial or scattered.*[36]

Hence Tuttle's *Abstract* (1964), like Judd's first horizontal progression made in the same year, is a painted surface/shape/object that conflates the sculptural and the pictorial to create a highly specific, self-evident form: a real object occupying real space and possessing actual (versus illusionistic) volume.[37] Yet here, as in other constructed paintings, Tuttle breaks with Minimalism's primary insistence on the work's physical presence by inviting illusion and allusion through ideogrammatic forms and evocative titles, such as *House* (1965). His works have a pronounced identity almost too

plate 41 / plate 50 / plate 53

plate 45 / plate 17

plate 43

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

distinct for Minimalism's signature anonymity: *Abstract* hangs vertically like bones on a spine (its semicircular shapes will be a recurrent form in Tuttle's visual vocabulary). Even when plate 47 he does evoke the modular, geometric compositions of Minimalism, as in *Equals* (1965) or *Chelsea*, their wobbly contours and installation on the bias depart too greatly from Minimalism's stern plate 40 symmetry and resolutely abstract composition.[38] Other works, such as *Drift III* or *Sum Confluence* (1964), carry titles with poetic reverberations that make their unusual shapes all the more inscrutable. Such works align Tuttle with the more personal geometries favored by Parsons's circle, especially Kelly and Martin, both of whom engaged a more organic vocabulary than the Minimalists. Critic and curator Lawrence Alloway, for one, positioned Tuttle's work as "a continuation of the Hard Edge phase of the [Parsons] gallery...part of the current of post-expressionist, systemic art."[39]

At the start of the summer of 1965, Tuttle asked Parsons to show his work. She agreed, plate 63 and so, in the following season, Tuttle had his first one-person exhibition, becoming the youngest artist in Parsons's venerable stable. His artistic debut was positively received by the press (including the critic Lucy Lippard, who within a year would organize *Eccentric Abstraction*, the exhibition that announced the new direction of Postminimalism), and their response positioned the artist as the newest member within the ranks of "painter-sculptors." By 1965 it was no longer unusual for a painting to be eccentrically shaped or carry a shallow thickness, nor was it uncommon for a freestanding sculpture to be polychromatic. Yet what utterly differentiated Tuttle's work from other artists mining this vein was the particular quality of his line as manifested in his work's literal plate 44 edge, best seen in pieces such as *Silver Picture* (1964), a pure line-into-object.[40] Derived at their root from the drawn line, Tuttle's constructed paintings retain the originary vibrancy and tremor of the hand at work. It is in these pieces that we first see Tuttle's inimitable quavering limning, with its capacity to infuse his pieces with the animated energy and distinction of a living organism. "It is by their contours that he is most eloquent," wrote Gordon Washburn in the brochure accompanying Tuttle's first solo show, "the subtlety of their modulations giving them the air of faintly breathing...like tender living things."[41]

These works are the earliest manifestations of a drawing-centered aesthetic strategy that Tuttle would pursue throughout his career: he transposes the methods, materials, and liminality of drawing onto painting, sculpture, even architecture, and in so doing he exceeds and overturns the traditional bounds of each. At the same time, he also maximally teases out each individual medium's formal capacity. Drawing, for example, may resolve itself in a profusion of ways: as the physical contour or cut edge of a painting, the double-hemmed seam of an unstretched canvas, the creases across a dyed cloth surface, the vector of a wire as it moves through space, the ready-made strand of a cotton rope, the incised skeins of a scored wooden surface, or the dried glue filaments crisscrossing an

17 Donald Judd **Untitled** 1964
Lacquer on wood, 5 x 25 1/2 x 8 1/2 in.
Collection of Aaron I. Fleischman

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, “A Universe of Small Truths,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

assemblage—not to mention the pencil line drawn on a flat sheet of paper. The essential properties of painting are likewise atomized throughout Tuttle's work; colored strokes, materials such as stretcher bars and canvas supports, and the means of hanging and framing are each treated as separate and independent values, taken apart and then eccentrically reconstituted. Even the traditionally resistant properties by which sculpture has long been defined—weight, mass, closed volume, and stasis—are simultaneously negated and restaged. In Tuttle's work, a sculpture is placed on the wall and made to behave like a picture; volumes contract to lines and planes that are then radically opened back up again, their insides and outsides made equivalent so that the work is almost undone as a closed, solid shape. Thus he both expands and explodes the definitions of sculpture, painting, and drawing by doing two things at once: he merges art forms to create composite works, and in that same process he separates out and redeploys the elements that constitute the determining factors of each individual medium. The challenge of this two-pronged approach comes in holding these disparate and now radically opened art forms together at the very edge of chaos—the most vivid examples of which would appear in the 1980s with Tuttle's wall and floor assemblages, wherein each medium's multiple material determinations are tested to their internal limits as well as against one another.

In the late fall of 1965, following his successful solo show at Parsons, Tuttle moved to Paris to become the first resident American artist at the Cité Internationale des Arts, on a C. Douglas Dillon Foundation grant that provided him a studio and a stipend. There he constructed several freestanding works from cut and assembled blocks of wood that deliberately explored elemental and rudimentary shapes. This group would lead to the polychromed *Wheel* (1966), which was among the first works the artist exhibited in Europe at Alfred Schmela's gallery in Düsseldorf in 1968. The timing for a stay in Europe was poor, however, as it abruptly extricated Tuttle from the positive reception of his work in New York; he quickly became artistically paralyzed in Paris and returned home after only six months. Upon arriving in New York City he moved into a new studio in a storefront near the Hudson River, on Eleventh Avenue between Fifty-first and Fifty-second streets. At the same time he rented a small apartment upstairs from the studio, where he would remain until 1996. Shortly thereafter he produced his "tin pieces," forms made in much the same way as the constructed paintings, from a double template transferred onto a thin sheet of silvery galvanized iron from which the pieces were cut and fitted together with a thin soldered band to create narrow, boxlike forms with welded seams. Tuttle produced two bodies of such work, the second of which was made in three versions, each consisting of twenty-six pieces corresponding to the number of letters in the English alphabet. It was the second such version that constituted his second show at Betty Parsons Gallery in 1967.[42]

plate 55

plate 57

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

When Tuttle initially exhibited *Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)* (1966), he arranged the
plate 18 pieces on a tablelike platform and, as in the case of his earlier paper cubes, invited the visitor to hold the works in his or her hand. When the work was shown again in 1975 as part of Tuttle's first survey at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, it was initially installed constellation-
plate 56 like across a wall, then later laid out on the floor. These divergent presentations fulfilled the artist's instructions that the work be exhibited in any way the installer wished, thus welcoming a continuous visual evolution of the work through installation. A contemporaneous review of the Parsons show commented on this "do-it-yourself aspect" of the work, noting that it was "indicative of a strong trend towards audience participation characteristic of several types of recent sculpture."[43] It is worth dwelling on this direct address of the work to the spectator, for Tuttle made *Letters* dependent on the physical engagement of the viewer in a manner far more radical than the phenomenological turn that artists such as Robert Morris were just then introducing into the minimalist dialogue. Whereas Morris's large plywood sculptures at the time intruded into the viewer's space but resisted touch, the physically modest *Letters* invited the viewer to interact with the artwork on a much more tangible and immediate level, suggesting that the work must be completed in experience.

Such moves beyond a purely visual and toward a phenomenological experience of art typically go hand in hand with an eschewal of the allusory. Yet Tuttle's *Letters*, despite their concrete structure, allude to the Roman alphabet through their letterlike forms and the number of constituent objects. Each individual emblem in *Letters* calls to mind a primal integer in a given semiotic system and as such sets off a chain of near-associations and descriptions: each calligram *signifies*, although what it signifies is purposefully not made clear. Meaning accrues, without resolution. *Letters* is striking for the way in which it connotes language without embodying it. At the same time, the forms assume a highly specific presence at the level of matter, as abstract sculpture. The power of the work derives from the overlapping of two distinct systems at the threshold of comprehension: the sculptural is inflected with the linguistic, and, conversely, the marks used to represent the spoken word take on an obdurate glyphlike physicality. In the end, they articulate themselves as presences rather than representations, "the letter using itself, not depicting."[44]

In creating work that is calligraphic while effectively forestalling specific discourse—in alluding to and then deferring a logic of language—Tuttle consciously refrains from conveying meaning along normative channels in order to advocate a language outside of standard conventions.

18 Installation view of **Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)** (1966) at the 1967 exhibition **Richard Tuttle,** Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Of his 1989 suite of drawings *40 Days*, he has written: "I would prefer to think that language and image are two worlds constantly seeking stability, the best possible relationship the two can have, that is neither language, *nor* image, and *that* is what the drawings are about."[45] The creation of a fruitful, unstable field between known systems of representation—between the verbal and the visual here, among painting, drawing, and sculpture elsewhere—is, as we have seen, a fundamental principle of Tuttle's enterprise. He "un-writes" calligraphy and its cousin, drawing; "de-skills" painting and sculpture; and deliberately cultivates a denotative incoherence in order to achieve a fundamental independence from assumed or received systems and to create an altogether new space for communication—to invent, according to Tony Smith (for whom Tuttle was working as an assistant at just this time), "patterns, forms, rhythms, orders by which we might live more intelligibly."[46] It should come as no surprise that the twenty-five-year-old Tuttle should attempt to escape from "cultural confinement"[47]; every bit a part of his place and time, he was in sync with an era of broad dissent against all forms of tradition and authority—linguistic, aesthetic, not to mention governmental—living as he was in a period that saw the rise of an anti-establishment culture actively agitating against an escalating war in Vietnam as well as racial and sexual inequities at home.

plates 249–51

Diction, syntax, and the structure of the alphabet have remained compositional tropes for the artist as he maintains his aspiration to achieve cognition without denotation. Probably the clearest indicator of Tuttle's involvement with lexicon systems is his frequent use of the alphabet to structure and title his work in series. Examples include *A 1* through *Y 1*, a 1981 series of twenty-five assemblages; the sculptural components, each named after a letter of the alphabet, in *Inside the Still Pure Form* (1990); and, more recently, the series *Type* and *Blue/Red Alphabet* (both 2001). Meanwhile, the shapes of letters and type inform the artist's most "Tuttle-ish" leitmotif shapes, such as the commalike *Dish* and the asterisk form of *Fountain* (both 1965), the *U*-shaped cloth piece *Untitled* (1967), and *P*-shaped elements in *Memento, Five, Grey and Yellow* (2002). Finally, Tuttle's works often recall narrative sentence structures in their sequential installation, as in the left-to-right phrasing across the gallery wall of *Beethoven Stop on the Way to Egypt* (1986) or *Forms in Classicism* (1989), whose components seem as if connected by an *and*, *or*, or *is*.

plates 33, 195–98
plate 310
plate 46 / plate 50
plate 74 / plate 354
plate 206 / plate 248

It is informative that Tuttle's *Letters* were exhibited in the same year as the publication of Sol LeWitt's 1967 essay "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,"[48] which baptized a then-burgeoning artistic direction that brought the aesthetic primacy of visuality to a crisis (a process already set in motion by the perceptually reductive work of Minimalism). Conceptual artists such as LeWitt and Lawrence Weiner privileged the ideational content of art and asserted that the visual form was no longer considered art's necessary condition.[49] This position prompted two broad currents. One focused on numerical and linguistic systems, making them the basis for the production of artworks that themselves critiqued visual perception (exemplified in works by Bochner and Joseph Kosuth). The other, related current led to works that, in their renunciation of the physical object and the process of perception, went so far as to "dematerialize" the object of display altogether (as in the

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

case of Robert Barry's *Inert Gas* series and Michael Asher's curtain of blown air). Clearly, language as a mode of inquiry and as a medium took on enormous importance in advanced art circles at this time, encouraged by the emergence of structuralist thought in the United States and the newly translated and influential writings of philosophers and intellectuals such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It is interesting to note, then, how Tuttle, in typically contrarian fashion, set himself to creating works that were adamantly *in*articulate. While artists like Bochner (and Johns before him) opened up the space between referent and sign, text and visual form, in order to question their certitude and exaggerate the discrepancies between such systems of knowledge, Tuttle used the incommensurability between such systems to create a new, alternative order of glyph-matter that is both unillusionistic and symbolic. While Conceptual art was healthily skeptical of language's once-assumed certitude, Tuttle was skeptical of analytical logic itself. Perhaps his work in this arena comes closest to the drawings and writings of Robert Smithson, a friend of the artist. The following passage in particular puts one in mind of Tuttle's artistic efforts: "Language operates between literal and metaphorical signification. The power of a word lies in the very inadequacy of the context it is placed, in the unresolved or partially resolved tension of disparates.... Here language is built, not written. Yet, discursive literalness is apt to be a container for a radical metaphor."[50]

plate 19

Tuttle has spoken often to his antianalytical stance: "When I surrender my intellect, when I give up its special child, then I proceed to step into a kind of unknown situation which I find is creative, as opposed to the intellectual in this case."[51] Tuttle diverges from Conceptualism's rationalistic strain in his devotion less to philosophical, mathematical, or linguistic tracts than to the lyrical—specifically poetry, a medium that, like Tuttle's own work, mines a more affective language. Compare LeWitt's instructions for wall drawings to Tuttle's sentence "This is an attempt at a black and white center with the black form acting like a shadow and trying to be like white, which it is" for an example of Tuttle's more wistful wordage. Mention has been made of his youth among poetry lovers; he is well versed in the historical developments of modern poetry, and particularly in a tradition of innovative experimentation that emphasizes the material, typographical dimensions of words and acknowledges the silent empty spaces around them as much as the text itself—from Stéphane Mallarmé's late-nineteenth-century Symbolism through Italian Futurism, Dada, and post–World War II concrete poetry up to Carl Andre's typescript poems. Since 1977 Tuttle has collaborated regularly with poets in the production of books—most importantly with Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, whom he married after their collaboration on *Hiddenness* (1987)—always with a view to making an object in which the poem and the picture relate, not as text to illustration, but as complementary parts of a single uncommon discourse.[52]

19 Robert Smithson **A Heap of Language** 1966
Pencil on paper, 6 1/2 x 22 in.
Museum Overholland, Amsterdam

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Tuttle is smitten with the book form in addition to poetry; indeed, his book work is of such importance and so highly regarded as to enjoy a focused study elsewhere in this publication.[53] For the purposes of this essay, suffice it to say that Tuttle's attraction to the book medium extends his deep-seated interest in a sustained and intimate dialogue between the object and its reader/viewer via the experiences of sight, touch, and sound. In keeping with his methodology, he has continually trafficked between the production of books and objects, using each medium as a conceptual stepping stone to accelerate developments in the other, as in the case of the book *Story with Seven Characters* (1965), whose floating glyphs anticipate the constellation-like wall installation of *Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)*. The book *Interlude: Kinesthetic Drawings* (1974) allowed the artist to catapult himself from the production of wire works to the *Wood Slats. Two Books* (1969), which includes one thick and one slender volume, galvanized Tuttle in the direction of progressively thinning down his artwork's dimensionality, aligning him with the strain of Conceptual art that sought the dematerialization of the art object.

plate 366

plates 356–57

plates 126–28

"Words and walls were the basic building blocks"[54] of avant-garde practice in the mid-1960s, which saw artists like Tuttle, as well as LeWitt and Weiner, bridge the intimate plane of the page and the public space of the wall. Where Tuttle's work comes closest to the conceptual camp—in particular its aforementioned immaterial strain—is in the *Paper Octagonals*, first exhibited in 1970.[55] These appeared toward the end of a five-year period during which Tuttle's work underwent a successive reduction in its object quality, most clearly demonstrated by his work with the octagonal shape, made first in cloth, then in paper, and finally in wire. Tuttle made a total of twelve *Paper Octagonals*, their shapes based on a square set on its side and cut off at its corners: while the first examples have a pronounced symmetry, the later ones are more eccentric (with the last "octagonal" being nine-sided). In a conceptual vein, the works derive from templates in much the same way that LeWitt's wall drawings are rooted in written instructions, with both methods raising provocative questions regarding originality, authorship, and circulation. For example, Tuttle's *11th Paper Octagonal* exists as an unlimited edition (it was initially distributed inside an exhibition catalogue); its composition, like the others, is left open to chance as the owner may attach the work to the wall on either side and in any direction he or she wishes. This incorporation of flux and change—the defining characteristic of living things—is a critical ingredient in Tuttle's overall oeuvre and finds ultimate expression in the refusal of any singular compositional resolution or final state. Each *Paper Octagonal*'s composition is further opened to contingencies when pasted directly to the wall, where it achieves a distinctive surface as the wall's texture shows through the thin paper and becomes very nearly inseparable from it. Underlying texture augments these qualities of transparency. Thus the work treads a fine line at the edge of complete dematerialization, but, significantly, it never completely renounces its (discrete) objecthood. Tuttle's art is contingent and tenuous, yes—but also and always tangibly material. Finally, the sheer beauty of these works lies in their gossamer buoyancy once installed, and particularly in their almost magical capacity to catch and hold ambient light, as if internally illuminated.

plates 23, 85–94

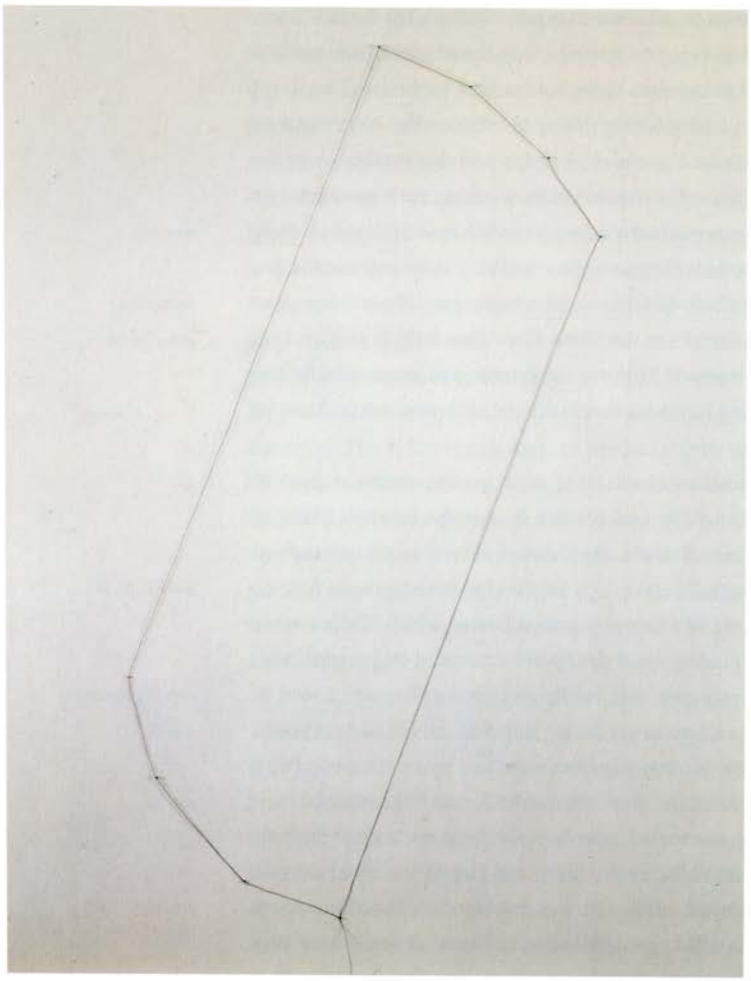
plate 21 / plate 20

plate 22

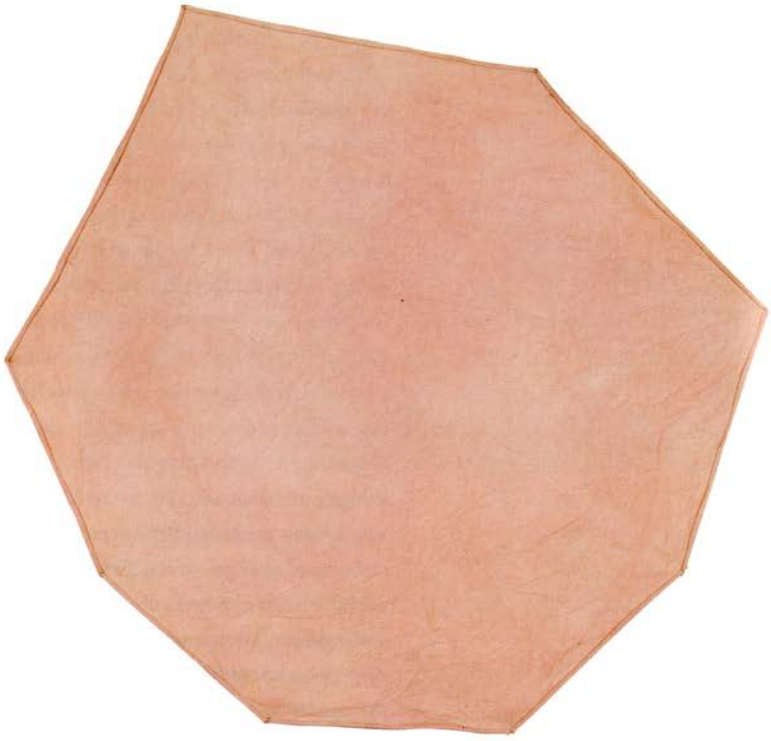
plate 23

plate 85

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, “A Universe of Small Truths,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64



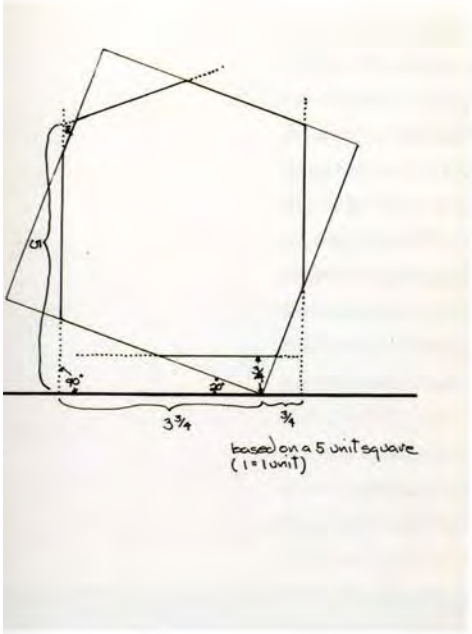
20 Richard Tuttle **Wire Octagonal (#7)** 1971
Wire and nails, 49 x 17 in.
Private collection, Dallas

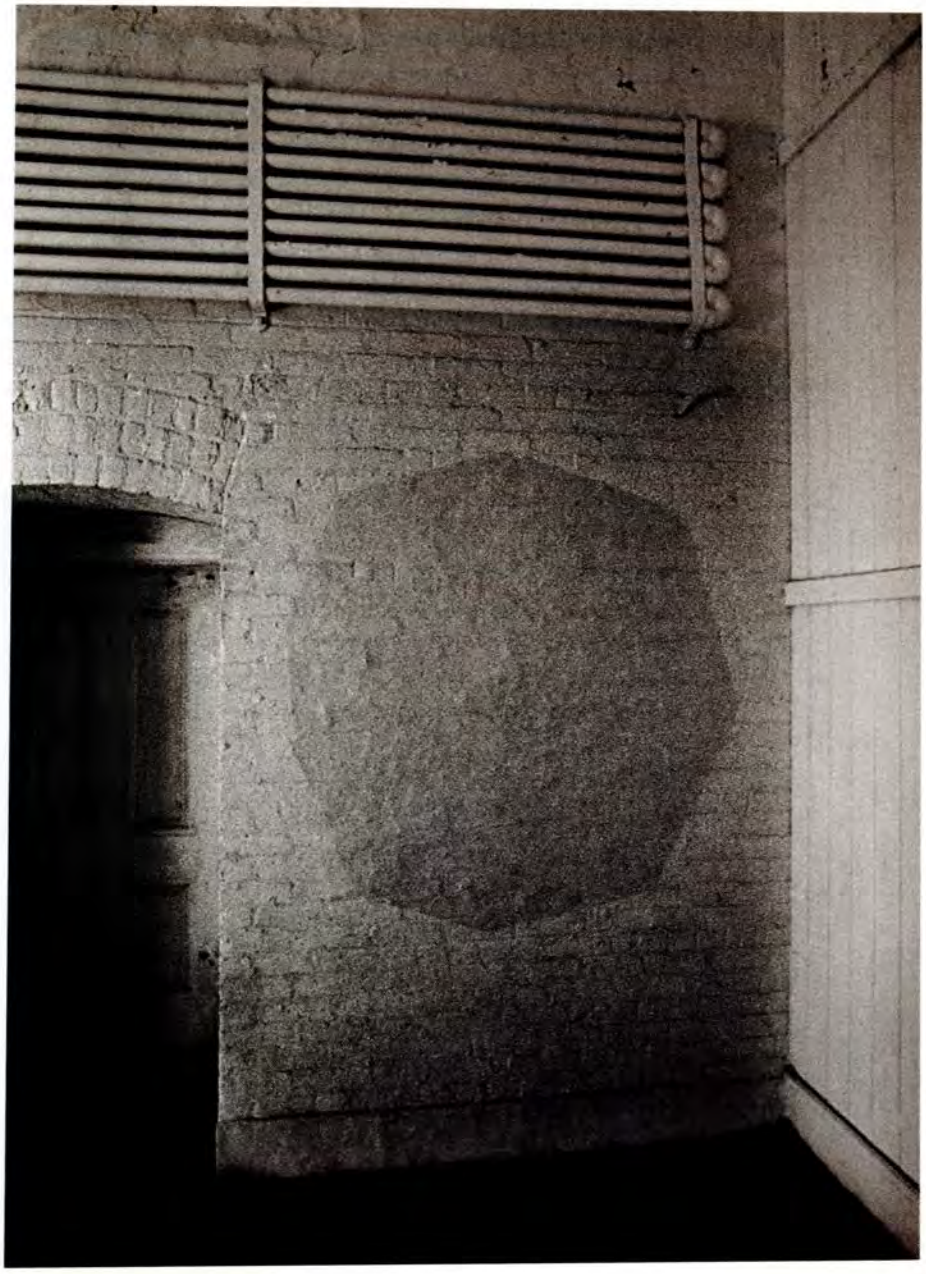


21 Richard Tuttle **Purple Octagonal** 1967
Dyed canvas and thread, 54 7/8 x 55 1/2 in., orientation variable
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, gift of William J. Hokin

22 Diagram of the making of **11th Paper Octagonal,** from the catalogue of the exhibition **Richard Tuttle: Das 11. Papierachteck und Wandmalereien / Richard Tuttle: The 11th Paper Octagonal and Paintings for the Wall** at Kunstraum München, Munich, 1973

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, “A Universe of Small Truths,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64





23 Installation view of the 1973 exhibition **Richard Tuttle** at the Clocktower Gallery, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, showing **12th Paper Octagonal** (1970)

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

plates 21, 72–84

Immediately after making *Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)*, Tuttle made a group of dyed cloth pieces that, when exhibited at Betty Parsons Gallery in 1968, placed him squarely at the center of the postminimalist vanguard. Tuttle went about making these works by washing sixty-inch-square sections of canvas and then hand-cutting them into the shapes of paper templates he had worked up in watercolor studies. (It was the way in which these watercolors saturated and also physically pulled at their newsprint surfaces, causing a surface rippling and slight relief, that led Tuttle to the decision to dye rather than paint his cloth pieces). The dimensions of these cut shapes suggest the circumference of the artist's arm span. Once cut, the canvas was roughly sewn with a double-sided hem and, lastly, balled up and submerged in a tub filled with Tintex, a common liquid household dye that soaked directly into the canvas weave so that surface and color became absolutely integrated. The canvas was subsequently hung up with clothespins to dry, and the wrinkles and uneven coloring inherent to the dyeing process were allowed to remain, giving each work a unique if recessive surface inflection and slight modulations in color. Once dry, the same work could be hung loosely on the wall, with as few nails as possible and free of any stretcher armature, or laid seemingly casually on the floor. It was also assigned no specific orientation, not even a front or back. The radical nature of this position is echoed in Scott Burton's essay for the 1969 exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form: Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information* at the Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland, one of the shows that consolidated the postminimalist sensibility:

plates 58–61

plate 24

> *The humbleness of Richard Tuttle's wrinkled, dyed, nailed-up pieces of cloth is rivaled only by their grandiosity of conception—they have no back, no front, no up or down, they may be attached to the wall or spread out on the floor. Imagine making an object which will maintain its integrity in all circumstances yet which exerts absolutely no demands on its situation.*[56]

Initially these cloth pieces, some with cut-out centers, were eccentric in shape and obliquely referential, as in *Untitled* (1967), which may be read as the flattened outline of an arch and its shadow, or perhaps an infinity sign.[57] Elsewhere, contours derive from a three-dimensional, square-cornered *U* shape seen in perspective, but whose interior angles have been excluded (as in two untitled works of 1967)—hence Tuttle's term for these works as "drawings of three-dimensional structures in space."[58] Tuttle himself described *Canvas Dark Blue* (1967) as "the outline of a square with three diagonals coexistingly crossing out and supporting the square."[59] As he progressed, the cloth pieces became less complex in source and silhouette, finally taking on an eight-sided configuration: the first to do so, *First Green Octagonal* (1967), derived its shape from the asymmetrical superimposition of two

plate 79

plates 74, 81

plate 80

plate 82

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

volumetric rectangles. There followed a suite of classic octagonally shaped cloth pieces, each evoking various takes on the overlapping of two flat squares. It was as if the minimalist cube, in its exhaustion, had collapsed into flat cloth, passing from sculpture into painting.

Indeed, Tuttle's cloth pieces can be considered emblematic of the challenge posed to Minimalism by its emerging counterpart, Postminimalism, which arose even as Minimalism was reaching its public heights in 1966. As Robert Pincus-Witten has written, "The complexity of the Post-Minimalist situation is exemplified by the fact that the exhibition called *Ten*, one of the important exposures of Minimalist sensibility then at its apogee, opened on the same day in September 1966, and in the same building as *Eccentric Abstraction*, which was one of the first surveys of counter-Minimalist sensibility."[60] Postminimalism was also often identified as "Process art" for its emphasis on and revelation of the means by which a piece is executed (such means becoming so primary as to be inseparable from the very meaning of the work) and "Anti-Form"[61] for its exploration of the inherent properties of unorthodox and often malleable materials. The eventual preferred nomenclature, Postminimalism, would shortly develop a vigorous international profile in the United States and Europe, particularly in the form of Arte Povera in Italy (where it was concentrated in Turin and Milan) and in the work of Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf. The trend encompassed a heterogeneous and ever-changing constituency of artists, most around thirty years old, who created highly diverse and divergent work in a tremendous range of materials and styles that were nevertheless conceptually and methodologically congruent. Their activities were supported by and consolidated in various exhibitions on both sides of the Atlantic, the most important of which included Tuttle's work at their nucleus: among them, *When Attitudes Become Form*, curated by Harald Szeemann in 1969; *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, organized by two young curators, James Monte and Marcia Tucker, for the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969; *Documenta 5* in Kassel, Germany, in 1972; and *Arte come arte*, organized by Germano Celant in Milan in 1973. Tuttle was celebrated in the press as part of a coterie of "with-it" Young Turks: he was profiled in a 1968 issue of *Time* along with "process artists" Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Robert Ryman, and Keith Sonnier.[62] In the art press, one of Tuttle's untitled 1967 works appeared on the cover of *Artforum* in February 1970 as part of the first in-depth assessment of his work up to that point, while *36th Wire Piece* (1972) was reproduced on the cover of *Arts Magazine* in November 1972. There is no question that in the early 1970s Tuttle's work, always considered "way out on the outer edge,"[63] fell in line with a larger artistic zeitgeist.

plate 25
plate 391
plate 392

And yet, even within this extraordinarily diverse and idiosyncratic arena, Tuttle's art stood out as something of an anomaly. The challenge that his "very controversial works"[64] posed to viewers at the time resulted from their location at the utter extreme of both painting and sculpture. Tuttle's cloth pieces constituted a frontal assault on what seemed to be every essential attribute of painting. He dismantled its elemental properties, dispensing not only with the traditional rectangle,

24 Installation view of the 1969 exhibition **When Attitudes Become Form: Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information** at Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland, showing Richard Tuttle's **Bow-Shaped Light Blue Canvas** (1967)

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

stretcher support, and frame, but also with paint itself: "Even the least stringent definition would indicate that to qualify as a painting, a surface must at the very least be *painted*. Tuttle's *Octagons* are dyed."[65] At the same time, the cloth pieces were recognized for their pronounced physicality and shaped construction as well as the three-dimensional volume apparent through surface incident—seams, wrinkles, slightly undulating surface—that, no matter how discreet, lent the works their objecthood. As such, they also joined a generational attack on sculpture's traditional properties by "pictorializing" it: Hesse, Alan Saret, Richard Serra, and Sonnier were among those artists who, like Tuttle, brought painterly qualities of color and gesture to three-dimensional work.[66] In sum, the cloth pieces made Tuttle the most pictorial of the postminimalist sculptors, and the most sculptural of the postminimalist painters.[67] Contemporary commentators honed in on the radically ambiguous status of the works: "It is not possible to say whether a Tuttle is a painting or a sculpture; it uses properties of both and is probably neither."[68] "They are flatter than the flattest 'pure' painting and yet curiously their non-dimensionality gives them a strong sculpturelike presence."[69]

25 Photograph published in the article "The Avant-Garde: Subtle, Cerebral, Elusive," **Time** magazine, November 22, 1968, showing (from left to right) artists Keith Sonnier, Bruce Nauman, Robert Ryman, Bill Bollinger, Robert Morris, Richard Tuttle, and David Lee

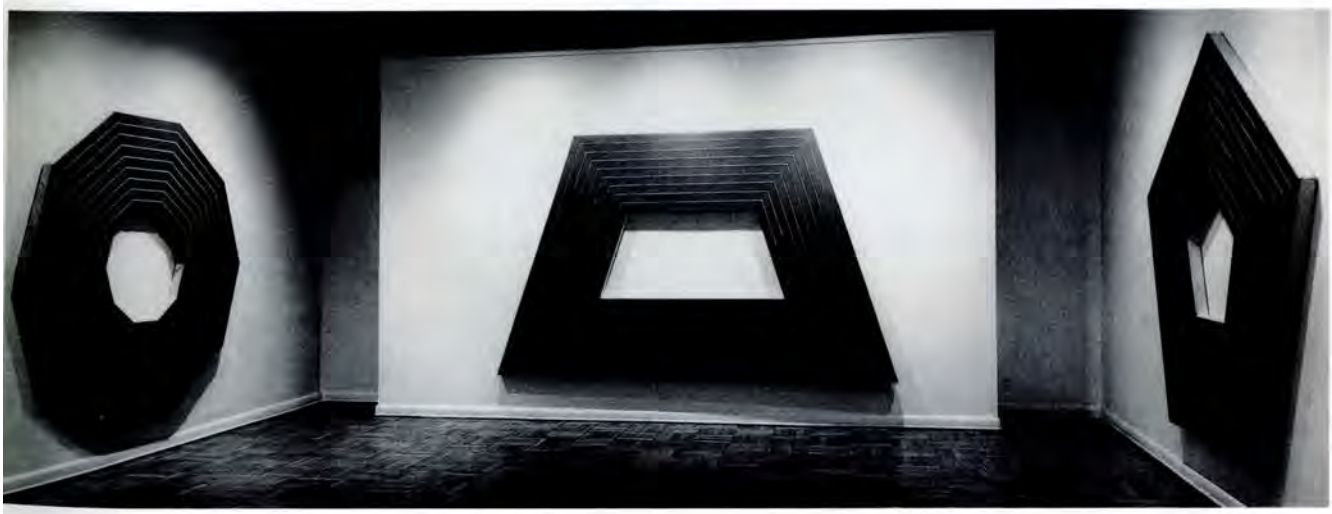
26 Installation view of the 1964 exhibition **Frank Stella** at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, showing (from left to right) **Henry Garden, Ileana Sonnabend,** and **Charlotte Tokayer** (all 1963)

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Where Tuttle's cloth pieces do find a certain kinship is with the work of painters such as Robert Mangold, Brice Marden, and Ryman, who were then affiliated with Klaus Kertess's Bykert Gallery, which opened in the fall of 1966 and quickly became an outpost for painterly Post-minimalism. Tuttle had exhibited his *Yellow Triangle with Three Thicknesses* (1967) there in 1968 as part of a group show that included Marden's painting, and Tuttle's work was also tied to Ryman's in contemporary art reviews.[70] Linking all of these artists was a highly conscious scrutiny of the concrete properties of painting. Both Tuttle and Mangold, for example, focused on shaped forms that attempted to marry painting to sculptural objecthood. Tuttle's pieces shared with Marden's paintings a restrained yet perceptually rich palette of muted, offbeat, monochromatic hues—gray green, oyster pink, mottled tan—carried on skinlike surfaces. Ryman's practice provides a particularly lively comparison—not only early on, when he and Tuttle used unstretched canvas installed directly on the wall and a process-oriented paint application that emphasized the behavioral properties of the medium as it performed on a given support, but again in the mid-1970s, when both would give prominent visibility to a piece's mode of attachment to the wall, highlighting the symbiosis between work and supporting surface. Finally, all of their output reveals the precedent of Stella, whose contemporary shaped paintings Tuttle was undoubtedly aware of: there is a correspondence between his cloth pieces and Stella's 1960–61 *Copper* series paintings in right-angled configurations of an *L*, *T*, or *U*, as well as the 1963 polygon-shaped canvases with open centers in purple metallic paint. When Tuttle first entered the art world, Stella was bringing painting to the edge of a sculptural terrain, primarily by eliminating the frame and thickening his stretcher bars so that the painting projected, objectlike, from the wall. Poised at the very edge of three dimensions, his work opened up the possibility for a group of younger painters and sculptors, including Tuttle, to question its premise and take things even further.

plate 78

plate 26



Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

The filament was a signature element of Postminimalism, encompassing Serra's ribbons of torn lead, Barry's nylon threads, Hesse's skeins of latex-dipped rope, Sonnier's lacy electrical cords, Nauman's cursive loops of neon tubing, Gordon Matta-Clark's architectural cuts, and Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* earth inscription. Tuttle's commitment to line as a primary form of visual expression, evident from the inception of his career, coincided at this time with the output of a group of peers who extended line into real space—hung from the ceiling, leaned against the wall, scattered across the gallery floor. At the forefront of the most radical experiments in drawing undertaken by his generation, Tuttle's liminal work of the 1970s—his wire works, *Rope Pieces*, and collage pieces—physically embodied and complicated line, never more so than in his audacious yet humble wire works of 1971 to 1974.[71] These developed out of the cloth octagonals, which, as part of Tuttle's penchant for visual reduction at this time, he eventually constructed in wire, allowing their silhouettes to take on ever more unorthodox dimensions—including an "octagonal" square (1971). Eventually the geometry of the octagonal broke up and took wing in works that interlace pencil line, wire, and shadow, fusing volume, surface, light, and space into breathtakingly original entities.

plate 108

To watch Tuttle make one of the *Wire Pieces* of 1972 is to recognize the degree to which it results from a full-on physical engagement. The artist begins by standing in front of a wall at a short distance, shoeless and with pencil in hand as he relaxes his body and gathers his mind into a concentrated, meditative state. What he is doing is remembering—less at a visual than at a neuromuscular level—the pencil line he is about to make, recapturing the specific original movements, the private choreography that enacts the line: hence the reason Tuttle calls making these works "an activity." This is the same method that he uses to execute *Ten Kinds of Memory and Memory Itself*, first installed at Daniel Weinberg Gallery in San Francisco in 1973, in which the pencil line comes off the wall to become three-dimensional lengths of string on the ground.[72] Because Tuttle dispensed with the template stage in the making of these works, they can never be duplicated but must be re-executed by the artist, and they are necessarily unique each time.

plates 110–17

plate 121

Once the kinetic root for the *Wire Piece* is tapped, Tuttle moves only his head and his right arm—the work thereby assuming human proportions—and with deliberate and serene attention, slowly draws a light pencil line in one go without lifting the pencil from its surface. The passage of the pencil across the wall produces random concentrations of miniscule deposits of graphite as it registers every bump, and also evinces varying thicknesses that correspond to the artist's mental and physical state at that moment—the degree of his steadiness, even his pulse. Once the pencil line is drawn, Tuttle begins to unspool a long filament of floral wire. He nails one end of the wire to the point of origin of the pencil line, and then painstakingly and methodically guides the wire to conform to the pencil line's trajectory. (In the first ten *Wire Pieces*, the wire followed the pencil line in its every irregularity; as Tuttle continued to make the works, the pencil and the wire were composed more contrapuntally and, finally, in *48th Wire Piece*, independently of each

plate 119

27 Installation view of the 1992 exhibition **The Poetry of Form: Richard Tuttle, Drawings from the Vogel Collection** at the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, Spain, showing work by Tuttle and Julio González

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

other.) The free end of the wire may then be secured with a nail to the end of the pencil line or be left untethered, causing the wire to spring out from the wall. The wire curves, loops, and swirls in response to the stored "memory" of its previously coiled state, to its manipulation at the hands of the artist, and to the force of gravity, and all of these interactions are unique in each installation. The wire also casts a shadow, the third critical linear element in this visual continuum, its density modulated by the wire's proximity to the wall and by the angle and level of lighting. The shadow conforms neither to pencil nor wire, and in its independence leaves the artist behind altogether, allowing the work to, in a sense, complete itself.[73]

The provocative and complex implications of these highly original works may best be described along a series of paradoxes. A *Wire Piece* is simultaneously completely self-evident in its structure yet illusionistically intricate; it carries no mysteries yet is full of surprises. Its contents ricochet among different levels of illusion and reality, yet it remains a unified whole. It is absolutely embedded in the world, indeed dependent on light and walls for its very existence, yet it has the insubstantiality of an inspired idea. There is so little material, so little topical surface to speak of with a *Wire Piece*, yet there is a palpable occupation of space—particularly when the work is seen at an angle, as is the artist's preference, when its sculptural qualities come to the fore. Its overlapping lines of pencil, wire, and shadow create spatial crosscurrents that unquestionably materialize space (as sculpture does), yet it dispenses with actual volume, mass, and weight. In this way Tuttle joins drawing to sculpture and also to painting (via the work's attachment to the planar wall that is the zone of painting). One is reminded of the work of Julio González, whose ambition as a sculptor was to "draw in space,"[74] and of Lucio Fontana, whose slashed and punctured canvases access tangible dimensions beyond the painting's flat surface. Not surprisingly, Tuttle admires both of these artists for their courageous efforts to incorporate real space as well as mass into their work. His deep respect and knowledge of their oeuvres is evidenced in his writing on Fontana and his 1992 installation involving sculptures by González.[75]

plate 71

plate 27

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

These works come very close to being truly alive, and an important aspect of what makes them feel so vital is, paradoxically, their utter impermanence. Like Tuttle's *Paper Octagonals*, each *Wire Piece*'s installation also presumes its eventual destruction. Beyond the work's physical insubstantiality, we are touched by the knowledge of its short life span, no matter how magical, how salient. In fact, the *Wire Pieces* suffer the very real risk of extinction, in that their production is entirely dependent on the living artist (hence his joking reference to them as "life insurance"). Rarely do artworks point so candidly to issues of mortality, especially the artist's own. Yet Tuttle's oeuvre in general evinces a disdain for permanence in its embrace of mutable displays and perishable materials, its often vulnerable scale, and its phantasmagoric quality. A knowing fragility is a central attribute of his work, as intrinsic to its power and meaning as the sense of emotional dignity and physical integrity that it conveys in the face of such transience. In this way Tuttle's art approaches that of his colleague Hesse, who of all the Postminimalists comes closest to Tuttle's merging of painting, sculpture, and drawing in works such as *Right After* (1969) and *Untitled* (1970).[76] It is known that Hesse struggled with the fact that she was using fatally unstable materials, yet she was attracted to them for their ability to achieve "a moment in time, not meant to last."[77] Likewise, Tuttle has stated, "people like something that lasts; I like something that vanishes."[78] In embracing ephemerality and refusing timelessness, Tuttle, like Hesse, opted for a freedom from history and a focus on the immediate present that is precisely what gives his work its signal animus.

plate 28

28 Eva Hesse **Untitled** 1970
Latex, filler, rope, string, and metal hooks, dimensions variable
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase, with funds from Eli and Edythe L. Broad the Mrs. Percy Uris Purchase Fund, and the Painting and Sculpture Committee

plates 133–39

With his collage pieces of 1978, Tuttle furthered his investigation into "a nervous space"[79] merging pictorial and sculptural qualities. The works, as before, are constructed in stages. First Tuttle "draw[s] with scissors"[80] to cut heavy, textured watercolor paper into abstract shapes, which behave more like objects than drawings thanks to their palpable if discreet corporeality. Within this series of eighty works, the paper constructs rarely exceed nine inches in length and often take a sectioned curve or ovoid form. Frequently there is a folding action that allows both the front and back of a single sheet of paper (normally mutually exclusive planes) to play visual roles. This paper element is brushed with a wash of watercolor thin enough to allow the texture of the paper to show through; it is then glued directly to the wall. Lifting away from itself on the hinge-fold, the element casts a subtle shadow and creates real volume and depth—not their pictorial inference—so that the work approaches the condition of a low relief sculpture. Each collage piece is completed when Tuttle extends its form beyond the paper border onto the wall itself, here

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

in pencil, there with a translucent wash of matching color. Image and surface, figure and ground, artwork and the world inextricably join forces in these color-shape installations.

In their reinstallation these works also fuse past and present, as the paper elements are redeployed and the drawn and painted extensions on the wall are made anew in situ. Such a strategy locates the works in a unique temporal dimension that bucks chronological time in favor of an "interchronic"[81] temporality. The collapsing of different modes of duration is clearly of great interest to Tuttle, for he has pursued this practice in subsequent works, including the series *Line Pieces* (1990) and *"I See"* (1993). As with the collage pieces, these more recent works require that the preexisting object be accompanied by pencil lines rendered on the wall by the artist. Catching and holding the spontaneity of the moment in this way is of prime importance to Tuttle; it is one way in which he can better ensure the preservation of his work's moment of inception and, by extension, its success as "something which flickers between a relationship with the alive, and with itself."[82]

plates 317–18

plate 242

The collage pieces also point to a prime characteristic of all of Tuttle's work: its singular correspondence with its environment. Like other members of his generation, Tuttle jettisoned the pedestal and the frame, barrier conventions that had isolated the zone of "high" art from the everyday arena of its viewer, in the process causing the role of the "ground" to shift to the literal space of the floor or the wall to which the work was now attached. Ever since then, the setting has played a critical role in the overall impact of Tuttle's production, furnishing the final pictorial ingredient, on a par with the work itself. The architectural container and its properties—wall, light, surface incident, architectonic idiosyncracies (window, door, radiator grille)—provide a "frame" and pivotal counterpoint to the works themselves. It is in its interaction with the environment that Tuttle's art comes to full fruition, not only formally but also in terms of "content"—in the tension and energy that the works release in installation. It is because *Drift III* is placed at a deliberate slight angle from the rectilinear coordinates of the gallery that it seems unmoored from its setting, tilting upward and away in the direction of the work's gently curving right side. Because *3rd Rope Piece* (1974) is installed thigh-high and isolated on a large expanse of wall, an even stronger sense of vulnerability—already present in the work's fragility and small size—comes into play. Then there are those works, like the *Paper Octagonals*, that literally cannot be experienced apart from the space that houses them. Conversely, other works draw the surface area of the room into their visual fabric, as in the space of wall that is held between and vivified by the two elements constituting *Equals*. It should be said, however, that Tuttle's work is not site-specific so much as unconditionally site-responsive. It is crucial to the artwork that it be put in "a situation"[83] under specific lighting conditions, at a precise height, and occupying the requisite amount of space needed to complete the piece. But it is the object only and not the site that demands these definitive circumstances in order to achieve that sense of "rightness" Tuttle always seeks, which makes the piece come alive. Hence the artist always takes care to be involved in the installation of his work, sensitive as he is to its final and crucial activation in space.

plate 53

plate 125

plate 47

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Tuttle's precise attention to the height of his objects from the floor was first prompted by the suite of eight *Wood Slats*, produced in 1974, which in their pronounced verticality marked a strong departure from the postminimalist emphasis on the horizontal axis. These thin plywood trapezoidal quadrilaterals are made to stand on their short, narrow sides and are nailed through their surfaces to the wall; the tallest and most slender, the *8th Wood Slat*, registers an upward velocity that helped Tuttle to zero in on a preferred point-height. From then until the late 1980s, Tuttle assigned a specific height to his works, including his drawings, a number of whose titles—such as *60" Center Point Works (8)* (1975)—double as height instructions. Tuttle has chosen a height of fifty-four inches off the ground, just below the average eye level, as central to his work. Hence the typical spectator looks slightly over the top edge of each work, the effect of which is that the object seems to reveal itself more readily and fully to the viewer, who in turn becomes that much more dynamically engaged by a wholly available piece.[84] Arrived at intuitively, this location is for Tuttle the place "where knowingness happen[s],"[85] both for the object in its fully manifested form and for the viewer with whom this relatively low height stimulates a direct physical interaction.

plate 128

A visual coefficient of height and a distinguishing, even infamous, feature of Tuttle's work is its frequently small size and paradoxical command of large space. Even in the 1970s, when artists from Christo to Joel Shapiro demonstrated a heightened interest in extreme scale, Tuttle's small sculptures "shocked" viewers with their barely there yet insistent presence.[86] Take, for example, *3rd Rope Piece*, first exhibited in his ten-year survey exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1975. It is quite simply a three-inch-long, three-eighths-inch-diameter piece of plain bleached cotton rope (such as might still be used for clotheslines), whose frayed edges the artist ruffles up before nailing the piece through its center and two ends to the wall, as if it were a naturalist's specimen. Hardly there, it is nevertheless, as the Whitney exhibition's curator, Marcia Tucker, wrote, "startling because, seen from a distance, [it is] powerfully present in the room despite [its] very small size.... What happens in viewing [it] is that the rope loses its substance and the shadow just underneath it becomes a stronger visual presence than the piece itself. The rope isolates the wall rather than vice versa, playing a peculiar trick of figure-ground reversal with its environment as well as with itself."[87]

In other words, the visual incident engendered by this work takes place not so much in it as around it, as its effects extend to environmental proportions.[88] Here Tuttle's *3rd Rope Piece* fulfills Carl Andre's definition of sculpture as "place." An important precedent for Tuttle, Andre describes place as "an area within an environment, which has been altered in such a way as to make the general environment more conspicuous."[89] Indeed, as Tuttle's small sculptures from this period oblige us to scrutinize them more closely, so too do they insist on an intensified apprehension of their, and our, surroundings, without in any way "filling up" much actual space. This is not easily accomplished, and in fact it relies on an impeccable sense of measure and proportion that strikes just the right triangulated balance of the object in relation to one's body and to the room's volume. Using an intuitive approach, Tuttle, as no other artist, has tested the limits of a

plates 130–32, 291, 293 / plates 300–301

29 Photograph published in the article "Phoenix in Venice," **Time** magazine, July 26, 1976, showing Venice Biennale visitors viewing Richard Tuttle's **Portrait of Marcia Tucker; at Venice** (1976)

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

work's material reduction and located his pieces at the living edge beyond which they would fail or even disappear as artworks. The works, then, though physically slight, are far from conceptually modest, and their radicality is reflected in their contemporaneous reception. Critics and curators recognized that Tuttle "dared to test by what few constituent features"[90] art could be made, thus effectively "pushing the question of what art is more than anyone else."[91] It was due precisely to the iconoclastic extreme to which Tuttle took this investigation that his first retrospective in 1975 was pummeled so mercilessly by the press, to whom the work appeared as simply too much of a renunciation. The response to this survey show has become the stuff of legend and is the focus of a separate text in this volume.[92] Yet, as devastating as the reception was for the artist, it did not dissuade him from pursuing the ground zero of inverse scale-to-space relations, nor the related paradoxical link between scant materiality and significant impact. To wit, as one of the American representatives to the 1976 Venice Biennale, Tuttle exhibited a small sculpture made of wood, "no larger than two joints of a finger, stuck on the wall and identified by a label that occupies more space than the object itself."[93] Meanwhile, a 1979 survey of his diminutive collage pieces at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam met a welcome at times as hostile as that accorded the Whitney show.

plate 29

Still, Tuttle persisted. In a private mode, he explored small-size sculptures throughout the 1970s. What is interesting about these works is how successfully they resist the latent pejorative notions that often pertain to small-size art. Small scale may connote preciousness, insignificance, timidity; the reason Tuttle's works stubbornly resist such characterizations is that they are not, in fact, miniature at all, but of the size and scale necessary to convey specific content and affect. In each of his works, whatever its size, Tuttle finds an internal measure, a physical proportion that is "just right" insofar as it correlates precisely to the work's intentions. Tuttle's uncanny, instinctive sense of aesthetic rightness and the discretion of his discrimination make for his rare knack of never producing a sculpture that is bigger—or smaller—than it ought to be.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Even as Tuttle in the 1970s stretched the parameters of what might materially constitute a work of art, he embarked on a prolific period of making drawings using the most basic and traditional form of inscription: the graphic mark on a page. Drawing became a daily, solitary occupation for the artist, who often worked in spiral-bound sketchbooks. In these drawings from the 1970s, one sees a consistent approach to the page. Having chosen a piece of paper, Tuttle would seldom crop it; as with his use of the wall, the whole sheet—complete with any perforated edges—was employed as a kind of readymade connection to the world outside. The drawings' objecthood was also emphasized by the fact that many of them were originally exhibited directly on the wall and without frames, in an unmediated relationship with the physical space. Tuttle has a feeling for the paper as much as for the form that he creates. Media are applied lightly so that the paper's texture becomes an integral part of the work's physicality, and the "void" of the paper field is made to register as much as the "weight" of the image.

plates 147–94

The forms rendered in the drawings are often unitary, isolated figures centered on the page, not linked to any place on the surface and thus made to seem adrift and vulnerable, all the more so given their frequently small scale relative to the paper's overall surface. Occasionally the drawings reveal repetitive motifs, which register as equally weightless and unmoored. Tuttle draws luminous, clear, and airy shapes that are physically slight yet far from sensually meager. There is no trace of the work of drawing—no *pentimenti* that speak to any struggle—suggesting a spontaneous, at-one-go production. For the most part Tuttle is attracted to innocent, nonstatic images—not squares but diamonds, diagonals, circles, and especially spirals, forms that appear over and over throughout his work in all media (most spectacularly in a 1996 installation of a massive canvas wending its way, nautilus-like, through the galleries and stairwell of the Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland).

plate 30

It is in these works on paper that one can most clearly consider the quality of line that is the elementary particle out of which Tuttle's many-sided explorations evolve. What impresses most is the searching and ruminative nature of his line: how it conveys not thinking so much as a prediscursive state of mind, a preliminary probing that announces an emerging but still unknown thought and direction. This is a line perennially in the process of evolving rather than already attained and executed on the page—a fully formed *formative* line, an actual physical "becoming" that is fully expressive in its own right.

30 Richard Tuttle **Replacie the Abstract Picture Plane I** 1996
Cotton twill, grommets, wood, acrylic, strin
and monofilament, dimensions variable
Kunsthaus Zug, Switzerland

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

If drawing has traditionally been regarded as cognition made visually manifest—if it comes closer than any other medium to the visible transmission from conception to execution—Tuttle's mark is exceptional in the maximum degree to which it locates itself at this very threshold. Hence its tremulous responsiveness, its full and sensitive attachment to the hand and the body, its extreme sensitivity "to the actual event of making the line."[94] This "event" issues from a questioning mind, which inflects a physical impulse, which generates a gesture, which results in images that are saturated with rumination. Tuttle's drawing is a felt approximation of thinking itself; as he has said, "the actual physical making of a drawing is very similar to comprehension."[95] Comprehension, not illustration: Tuttle frees line from its traditional role as describing or outlining "reality." His is "a line that doesn't represent anything beyond itself. In other words, the means to represent does not represent anything."[96] It is its own realization, separate and discrete, an autonomous and active player in the pictorial field.

That Tuttle refers to his artistic end product, whatever its medium, as "drawing" points to the central importance of this continual coming-into-coherence that his line so beautifully embodies. In a 1986 letter to a friend about a painting he was working on at the time, Tuttle writes, "This morning as I was painting it a second time I knew as I applied the paint that this was drawing or could be drawing—that the particular surface I was looking for was 'drawn,' not painted. I guess from the beginning I was attracted to this surface, its ultimate advantages, that drawing is the door to something real—in the sense we want to see something art *creates*, not art, itself."[97] That is to say that in all of his work, Tuttle desires for us to see—and for his work to remain in—the space where experience is generated, not depicted: the here and now of invention.

As invention has its roots in the conjectural, so too is Tuttle's enterprise at its base fundamentally speculative. "Some of my best work begins with a question and I try to answer that question. The question with [the *Wire Pieces*] was 'what would black and white look like simultaneously?'"[98] The question that led to *Rest* (1970s), to cite another example, was "Is there a way to see 'touching'...?"[99] Questions necessarily exclude certainty and preconception, open up to an unbounded space of possibilities, and privilege the experimental. "Where is what is hidden?" "What is the space in between?" "What is the opposite of a point?" Tuttle's answers take the form of "visual *satori*, the sudden wordless comprehension of a Zen parable,"[100] and are of such delicate contingency—literally held together by so much ephemeral connective tissue—that they seem to suggest that we are best served by conditional responses rather than definitive answers. Tuttle's speculative approach extends to his working method, which he has described as "a phase of search and research."[101] In response to an initial feeling or mental image,[102] a hypothesis is tested out, step by unpremeditated step—thus the artist intuits his way through to the creation of an object that is not known in advance and that may very well surprise him in the end, as the final work may not in any way resemble the initial impetus. This kind of modus operandi infuses each of Tuttle's works with a spirit of inquiry, improvisation, and discovery.

plate 293

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Tuttle's artistic evolution in the 1980s echoed a general reaction in the art world to the reductive formalism and reserve that had come to dominate artistic discourse in the preceding decade. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, an eclectic range of artistic activities—heralded as pluralism—had broadened expression considerably. "Art in the last few years has generally emerged from personal experiences rather than ideologies,"[103] pronounced the curators of the 1977 Whitney Biennial, to which Tuttle contributed. A year later, the same museum's exhibition *New Image Painting* announced the resurgence of recognizable imagery (if abbreviated), narrative association (if furtive), and expressiveness (if halting) after a decadelong period of abstract art's dominance. Within two years a promiscuous art industry exuding material extravagance at every level was launched. Pattern and Decoration painters and their East Village affiliates joined American Neo-Expressionists and their European counterparts in a pigment-loaded revival of painting of great plastic, optical force and subjectivity; meanwhile, in an oppositional camp, a theory-conscious appropriation art harshly examined consumer society and the conventions of representation by dismantling and redeploying mass-media imagery and questioning individual agency by presenting the self as a social and cultural construction. Finally, commodity and neo-geo art made irony and reflexivity the predominant sensibility among a generation of artists who placed everything in "visual quotation marks."[104] By 1984 the art market was booming with unprecedented numbers of new collectors, dealers, critics, and curators, not to mention artists armed with graduate degrees and commercial savvy, all spurred on by hyperactive media attention fueled by avid public interest. Tuttle's work, while staying its own course, nonetheless shared in the heightened theatricality and maximum materiality of the period as well as in its taste for imaginative association and individual expressiveness.

While in the 1970s Tuttle explored a reduction in both materials and visibility, the 1980s saw his work become extravagantly robust and heterogeneous, in terms of both materials and volumetric scale. There was a palpable sense of expansion from the perimeter in all directions, an impetus that generally manifested itself in a move from wall-dependent assemblage-constructions in low relief to high relief and on to fully in-the-round constructions. Tuttle's dimensional expansions began with the so-called framed drawings, a term given to numerous series of drawings for which the artist constructed frames that are integral to the overall work. While the first of these series appeared as early as 1974 (*Paris Arles*), they did not become a focal point for the artist until 1980, commencing with *India Work*, a suite begun during a six-week trip to India; the artist made drawings in Jaipur on local notebook paper—one of many

plate 207

plates 208–10

31 Richard Tuttle **Portland Works: Group I** (detail) 1976
Watercolor on airmail paper in handmade wood frame. 12 1/8 x 9 x 1 1/8 in.
Collection of Rosalind and Walter Bernheimer, Waban, Massachusetts

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

instances of Tuttle's preference for materials drawn from the immediate environment—and later encased them in nearly identical, beautifully contrived pine frames. This series was shortly followed by *Hong Kong Set* (1980) and *Brown Bar* (1981). Numerous bodies of framed drawings ensued, including several, such as *Portland Works*, in which the artist circled back to an earlier set of drawings (these were made in 1976 on airmail paper that had previously been glued directly to the wall) and framed them in highly specific fashion, essentially creating a new work of art in the process. Over the next two decades, Tuttle's frames would mingle with as often as encircle the elements contained within—cutting across the internal composition (see the horizontal magnet bands in *Icelandic* [1994]), riding inside rather than outside the drawing (as in *Verbal Windows* [1993]), or, in the case of *System of Color* (1989) and *When We Were at Home* (2002), taking over entirely as a primary compositional ingredient.

plates 211–20 / plates 221–22

plate 31

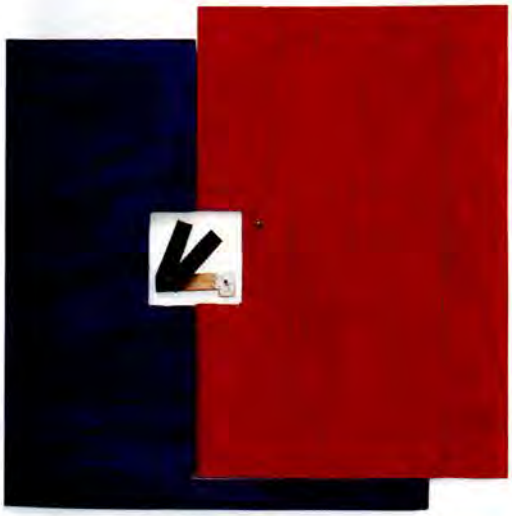
plate 235 / plates 232–34

plate 231 / plate 32

The use of the frame marked a dramatic change of direction for Tuttle, who with his peers had banished the frame and pedestal from the gallery in the 1960s. So it is safe to assume that his "rediscovery" of the frame and its preponderance in his work of this period point to a central aspect of his practice. With the framed drawings he overtly attended to, indeed insisted upon, the meeting point between the artwork and its supporting surface. Though utilitarian, the connection of the artwork to the wall is an important ideational zone for Tuttle: it is the threshold where illusion and reality, art and the world, literally meet. In extending his art to encompass the frame—traditionally a functional boundary cordoning off the picture from the outside world—he wished to conjoin and confound the illusory and the real, the work and the space.[105] One sees this intent manifested from very early on—in the paper cubes of 1964, for example, which are equal parts mass and space. In 1979 Tuttle wrote of his 1970s collage pieces, "The signs partly belong to the paper partly belong to the wall.... What matters is the fact that the object is partly the wall partly emerges from the wall without being able to get separate from the wall."[106] The 1974 *Wood Slats* constitute another attempt to create works that are perceptually unified with their surrounds, for they are painted on their thin sides to match exactly the color of the wall against which they are hammered absolutely flush, in a further effort to slim down an already-fine interstice between wall and piece. The mixed-media *System of Color* incorporates the backs of wide wooden framelike sections whose open arrangements visually integrate the wall into the pictorial space, generating a compositional interdependence between frame and field. Tuttle's will to make an artwork that is inseparable from real space also accounts for his ventures into wall drawing, which began in 1970 and include, among the most ambitious examples, *Blocks* (1988) and *Inside the Still Pure Form* (1990).

plates 126–28

plate 310



32 Richard Tuttle **When We Were at Home #19** 2002
Acrylic and wood on plywood, 16 x 17½ in.
Galerie Ulrike Schmela, Düsseldorf

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Tuttle has asserted on numerous occasions that his oeuvre resides "between calligraphy and architecture," referring to the zone where what is made by the hand touches matter and space. Since this is the arena he wishes to volatize, he is deeply attentive to the real points of contact between his pieces and their environmental ground, the locations where the distance between work and architecture collapses. This is why he gives prime symbolic and visual status to the ancillary hardware of picture-making—nails, framing strips, picture wire. This hardware is plainly visible throughout his work: the *Rope Pieces*, the *Wood Slats*, and more recent series such as *New Mexico, New York* (1998) and *Ten* (2000) are but a few examples where the affixing elements—here, nails—are driven through the very surface of each object, playing a visual as well as functional role.

plates 37, 326–31 / plates 347–48

India Work, Hong Kong Set, Finland Group—titles like these attest to the nomadism of Tuttle's lifestyle during most of the 1980s. He has always enjoyed traveling and draws creative sustenance from the activity, making art along the way, at all hours and anywhere.[107] (This partly accounts for his art's often-transportable size.) Seen in this light, pieces such as the *Indonesian Works* (1983–84), *Egyptian Works* (1986), and *La Terre de Grenade* (1985) take up the mantle of the hallowed "travel sketch," a repository for images and thoughts garnered on an artist's formative "grand tour." *40 Days* (1989) is perhaps the most impressive of these works—a stunningly beautiful, wordless account of a voyage taken by Tuttle and Berssenbrugge (who was pregnant at the time) from Hawaii to Japan to China to Thailand to Switzerland to Austria and additional points between. The first drawing, made on January 5, 1989, was inspired by the sight of a bank of clouds hovering over the Pacific Ocean from an airplane window. This horizonless bird's-eye view is maintained as a device throughout the sequence until the last image, which was made in Vienna at the close of the trip while overlooking a garden in springtime. Each image is a record of internal as well as external events, a map covering an emotional as much as a geographical terrain. Uppermost in the artist's mind while making this ensemble was the concept of generation, biological as well as artistic. Fecundity is everywhere evident: in the large number of drawings that constitute this suite, in the rich overlay of line and color, and in the multiple orientations taken by the drawings in their final installation.

plates 229–30 / plates 227–28

plates 249–51

Tuttle's restlessness in the early to mid-1980s was stimulated by the increasing interest in his work expressed by galleries and museums abroad. Europe proved particularly receptive: there were exhibitions in Brussels, Cologne, Geneva, Helsinki, London, and Rome; gallery representation in France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland; and works entering important European collections. In the spirit of the founding "post-studio" generation to which he belongs, Tuttle responds avidly to working in varied circumstances, for he feels that installing his work in multiple contexts advances his aesthetic thinking: he has written that "making an exhibition is a unique

33 Richard Tuttle **K 1** 1981
Acrylic, plywood, sawdust, and nails, 7 7/8 x 5 1/4 x 1 3/8 in.
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

opportunity to see something," to "produce new knowledge."[108] His extensive exhibition history may be explained by the fact that he makes crucial creative headway through exhibitions—even *after* exhibitions. As a result, when a visitor to the opening of a Tuttle show returns for a second look, it is not unusual to find that subtle yet essential adjustments have been made to the pieces on view—surfaces repainted, nails removed. This retooling and refining of the work in the public sphere is integral to Tuttle's working method.

Special mention should be made of Tuttle's highly regarded notebook drawings, the most extensive of the framed drawing series. The notebook drawings encompass eight discretely titled and visually consistent suites of works. One of these was exhibited at *Documenta 7* in 1982; another won Tuttle the Biennial Prize at the seventy-fourth annual *American Painting and Sculpture* exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago that same year. The works in *Old Men and Their Garden* (1982), the last of these groups, have crudely made double frames—inner frames painted white and surrounded by strips of raw fir—that produce the effect of telescoping in on the image. Inside each frame is a sheet of blue-lined, red-margined notebook paper, a plane made specifically for writing but here turned on its side into a patterned ground for imagery. Floating on these ready-made vertical bands are translucent puffs of gouache so evanescent as to have the air of something fleeting and only momentarily captured, like a breath. Capitalizing on the inherent properties of his materials, Tuttle has expertly allowed the thin pools of wash to soak and buckle the paper surface, introducing a subtle dimensionality that radiates out from the central form, which itself resonates with references—a dragonfly, grasses, a ghostly angel shape. (This last is a reminder that this particular suite was made as an elegy for Parsons, who died in 1982.) Fittingly, the final piece in the group is executed in black ink and exhibits the graphic fluency of Asian brush drawing, in which the speed and certainty of the gesture communicate strong feelings.

plates 223–25, 244

The framed drawings paved the way for the wall-bound assemblage-constructions, which Tuttle began building out of leftover material from *India Work*. The first series of assemblages, initially shown at Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, in 1981, marked a turn toward overt dimensionality not seen in Tuttle's work since the 1960s. Wall-dependent assemblage would continue to occupy Tuttle through numerous bodies of work until 1986, coinciding with his showing at the high-profile Blum Helman Gallery, a prime contributor to the heady atmosphere infusing New York's 1980s art scene. *B 1* and *K 1* (both 1981) demonstrate his initial tendency to stay within a limited range of materials (predominantly raw, painted, and scored wood) and to adopt a dense construction that allows for only a shallow spatial register.[109] With each subsequent body of assemblages, the compressed quality and limited material range progressively opened up to become highly volumetric configurations made from a plethora of disparate and

plate 195 / plate 33

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

inventive media, shapes, textures, and colors. As always, the sense of improvisation and informality characteristic of these pieces was arrived at by way of the most agile methodology, evincing equal measures of control of and surrender to material—a practice arising from a mind at once offhand and precise, and possessing the rare skill of seeing potential in the most unlikely things and conjunctions.

A number of Tuttle's favored materials derive from the margins of artistic practice, such as the packing trade (cardboard, bubble wrap, Styrofoam). Sometimes the artist will accidentally come across something where he is working that will prompt the creation of a piece: a single nail, for example, left by a previous artist-resident on the floor of a Vienna studio became the material locus that led to *Beethoven Stop on the Way to Egypt* (1986). Materials are not restricted to the workspace, however: Tuttle is a connoisseur of street junk, as evidenced by the bits of broken colored glass and Pepsi can that form part of *Two or More XII* (1984) or by the blue-painted twig that graces *Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room, 6* (1983). The coarse and banal quality of these found objects keeps Tuttle's visual refinement and tasteful flourishes well in check.

plate 206
plate 203
plate 200

Tuttle is particularly drawn to surfaces that have the capacity to reflect, play with, and incorporate ambient light—hence his deployment of cellophane wrap, glass fragments, plastic grocery-store bags, and aluminum. Materials like these inform the series *Two or More* (1984), particularly *Two or More III*, whose common superstructure is an airy layering of alternately opaque and transparent substances that promote a play of light and shadow. Along with light, color also assumed a central importance for Tuttle during this period, with his formerly subtle palette giving way to brilliant unmixed hues. Rather than simply tinting the surface, color assumes material substance, as in the carved Styrofoam blocks at the heart of *Monkey's Recovery I, #3* (1983), the double-mound form in *Two or More XII*, or the extra-thick deposits of white paint that enliven *Two or More IX*. Finally, what ties nearly all of Tuttle's materials together is their synthetic nature, which bespeaks a contemporary quality. Even when working with messy castoffs, he takes care that they not be decayed or antique looking, so as not to inadvertently generate feelings of nostalgia or melancholy for things or times past.[110] In its palpable factuality, its dependence on the viewer's immediate sensory response, and its embedded and exuberant here-and-now state, Tuttle's work is in every way present-minded.

plate 202
plate 201
plate 205

Tuttle clearly chooses his materials more for their formal attributes than for associative meanings deriving from an original function or past use. There are actually very few instances in which a found object is left untouched and its denotative sense preserved (the Pepsi can in *Two or More XII* is probably the most obvious example). More often than not, he transforms and redeploys objects drawn from

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

the everyday so that their extra-artistic inferences are mitigated or lost inside the new compound-object. And yet, while the object's initial meaning is never privileged, it can't help but maintain a vestigial recollection (even the part-object is not immune from reference), and in fact this serves a critical purpose, for it fortifies the assemblage's reality quotient by getting the world into the picture.[111]

At the same time, Tuttle's own artistic vocabulary, previously restrained in its approach to illusion and allusion, loosens to a degree not previously seen in his work: materials take on such recognizable shapes as a horseshoe, a boat, a leaf, even the female figure. Together these developments put into play a new dialectic between abstract form and recognizable subject. A loose symbiosis is established between abstraction and figuration, matter and meaning, in which, significantly, one term is not favored over the other. These polarities are evoked but not merged, so that each in effect functions independently. Tuttle's work is what sculpture looks like when it oscillates perceptually and conceptually between form and content, raw matter and pictorial representation, with both idioms cohabiting in novel physical rhythms and arrangements that forge a larger if enigmatic meaning.

The deliberately loose syntax between form and content also extends to the physical construction of these works. Tuttle's procedures for making the wall assemblages involve a wide array of tenuous connective techniques (gluing, tying, propping, stitching) and materials (hot-glue filament, paper tabs, Scotch tape). What holds the work together is emphasized rather than hidden—to the point where *Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room, 6*, Tuttle's masterpiece of the period, is a sculpture of pure connectives shunning a material core. Paradoxically, rather than synthesize, these widespread systems of affixing, in their explicit precariousness, visibly *undermine* any sense of stability—and that is precisely the point. The apparently makeshift technique is part of a deeply considered strategy of exemplifying and giving form to flux rather than representing it illusionistically. The traditional concepts of finish, architectonic stasis, and formal resolution all founder on the very real capacity of the wall assemblages to fall apart—and, in any case, such criteria are anathema to works that are dedicated to objectifying the transient. It is just this unstable axis that readies the ground for "emblems of immanence."[112]

In the floor drawings, the most visually robust and rambunctious works of the 1980s, Tuttle demonstrates his mastery of forms that are as close to collapsing into their individual parts as they are to cohering into sculptural wholes.[113] Executed intermittently between 1987 and 1989, this group of twenty pieces marked the assemblage's migration from the vertical plane of the wall to the horizontal surface of the floor, where it took on three dimensions and a large (by Tuttle standards) if indeterminate scale: "not-quite-object, not-quite-monument, not-quite-creature, not-quite-dwelling."[114] Nonchalantly placed in the middle of the room, the works ask to be approached and apprehended from all angles. In this passage around the work, the viewer experiences not

plates 34, 252–63, 265

34 Richard Tuttle **Five** 1987
Wood, canvas, fabric, acrylic, and linen thread, 41 x 59 x 61 3/4 in.
Collection of the artist

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

only an unfolding sequence of visual surprises, but also an utter dissipation of fixed coordinates and an even greater sense of physical dispersal brought to bear on an already open and elastic form. Transparent and spare in construction, the floor drawings teeter on the threshold between form and its undoing, armature and affect—and animate and inanimate. Perhaps because, like us, these works are freestanding and share the same space of lived experience as our own bodies, they seem singularly animated—playful, a bit sloppy, something "between creature and toy."[115] A great part of their appeal lies in the fact that, as tenuously constructed as they are, they are nevertheless tenacious—and like anything fragile that holds together, they earn our respect and affection while stirring our own sense of vulnerability.

The main materials in the floor drawings are lengths of wood arranged into skeletal structures and hooded or draped with cloth (this gesture recalls Tuttle's early practice of placing his cloth pieces on the floor).[116] The structure often takes the form of an undulating arabesque (*There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find I* [1988]) or the fabric is made to curve into a serpentine swag (*Turquoise I* [1988]). These forms call to mind the spiraling bodies and billowing garments of the Baroque, a period of long-standing and deep interest to Tuttle—never more so than during the mid-1980s, when he spent regular intervals in Vienna and exhibited work in the gilded and mirrored halls of a late-Baroque palace.[117] It makes sense that he would be attracted to the ideas and visual vocabulary of that era, with its easy interplay between two and three dimensions inside a shallow space, its polychromatic interlocking of architecture with painting and sculpture. The knowing fusion of the exalted and the humble (the supernatural and the human) exemplified by the Baroque is likewise taken up in his so-called lightbulb pieces (such as *Done by Women Not by Men* [1989]), each of which incorporates light—a preeminent symbol of spiritual and religious energy—here literally brought down to earth in the form of common fluorescent lamps and colored bulbs. Another defining feature of the Baroque, the fold, is a favored construct of Tuttle's as well. Since at least 1974, with *4th Summer Wood Piece*, which precedes the oft-folded collage pieces, Tuttle has used the action of folding in a quintessential manner—to swell next-to-no-volume into mass and thereby articulate space. Further to his own interests, the fold "insists on surface and materiality, a materialism that promotes a realistic visual rhetoric in its wake."[118] In other words, the fold helps us to see material as material, keeping the work in a fundamentally physical sphere as opposed to a symbolic one, as if Tuttle were insisting that the metaphysical be solely contained within and achieved through physicality.

plate 262
plate 265
plate 247
plate 303
plate 129

The floor drawings span a period of great change in the artist's life: his marriage in 1987; a removal from New York in 1988 to Galisteo, New Mexico; and the birth of a daughter, Martha, in 1989. The group of floor drawings titled *Sentences* chronicles Tuttle's impressions of his child's birth: *Sentences II* (1989) is decorated with ovoid forms inspired by the contours of a baby's head (and clearly referencing Constantin Brancusi's 1915 sculpture *Newborn*). These happy events were shadowed by illness and death among Tuttle's close family, and he began in this period to show his work against toned walls, which not only provided a "frame"—an optical backdrop and unifying factor—but also chromatically conveyed what he felt was a turbulent period in his life. That sense would remain with him until 1996, when the toned walls left his repertoire.

plate 307

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

With the turn of the decade from the 1980s to the 1990s, Tuttle's position in the art world shifted in ways that reflected, on the one hand, a codification of the now-historical Post-minimalist movement and, on the other, a positing of his work as prescient of and influential for an emerging generation of artists. Enough time having passed to allow the artistic period of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s to be synopsized, it became clear what Tuttle's role was among his post-minimalist peers. The 1990 exhibition *The New Sculpture 1965–75: Between Geometry and Gesture* plate 387 at the Whitney Museum of American Art was one of the first and most important shows to consecrate the movement, and it displayed Tuttle's works in the first gallery alongside those of Hesse and Nauman. Concurrently, the art of the 1960s took on new importance for work of the 1990s by artists such as Tom Friedman, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Jim Hodges, Gabriel Orozco, and Kiki Smith, among others. The resonances between these young artists' methodologies and Tuttle's approach manifested in a subjective if subdued content infusing minimalist structures; a direct and unpretentious use of materials within loosened formal parameters embracing the artist's "touch"; and a quality of temporality, in the form of a deceptively casual execution, transient substances, and precarious presences. These developments occurred in a climate that generated no overriding cohesive movement or "superstars." The upshot of working in a productively unfocused, heroless moment was that the ensuing art scene perforce supported the exercise of individual vision, past and present. In this context Tuttle began to be represented to the public eye as something of a hip "old master" whose maverick example exerted a "burgeoning influence on a younger generation of artists." "Tuttle is in the air again," offered *The New Yorker* in 1992.[119] Later in the decade the *New York Times* concurred: "Much of the work you see in galleries now—installations of humble materials, low-key abstractions, spare Zenlike interventions of one sort or another—owes a debt to him."[120] And the more specialized New York art press shared the consensus: "Out of step with the excessive '80s, Tuttle's frail constructed pieces now look perfectly au courant. In fact, Tuttle seems to be the godfather to a slew of younger funky formalists."[121]

Despite (or perhaps because of) this critical acclaim and artistic influence, Tuttle has always seen himself as operating at the culture's fringes, for such is the inevitable location of individual consciousness, admired or not. This self-perception has its counterpart in his love of marginal spaces: he has regularly endowed margin zones—the edge of a frame, the gutter of a book, the periphery of a room—with aesthetic import. This predilection was vividly brought to a head in a 1992 exhibition at Mary Boone Gallery, New York.[122] Into this central bastion of the 1980s art plate 316 boom Tuttle inserted a group of twenty-four near-invisible assemblages, averaging no more than a few inches tall or wide, placed at the bottom of the gallery walls. A pencil line ascended from each of these tiny works, beginning one-quarter of an inch off the floor and reaching the ceiling, where it continued at a right angle away from the wall for another eighteen inches, arcing slightly over the viewer. The assemblages obliged the viewer to squat down for a closer look, while the pencil lines guided his or her gaze upward. As subtly present as they were, the floor-bound sculptures and tall bands of parallel pencil lines utterly commanded the gallery, snapping the careful architecture of this highly successful commercial space into sharp focus while at the same time quietly subverting it by insinuating into it a market-defiant work.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

Tuttle's move to New Mexico, his primary residence for ten years beginning in 1988, had an immediate and ongoing impact on his work. Having initially installed himself in Galisteo, Tuttle eventually purchased property in Abiquiu atop a mesa affording a spectacular 360-degree view of virtually unspoiled desert landscape. The tranquil expansiveness, starkly radiant light, gentle palette, and natural geometries of his New Mexico surroundings clearly inform *Inside the Still Pure Form*, a richly complex installation involving wall painting, low-relief sculptures, and drawings that occupied two floors of New York's Blum Helman Gallery in 1990. For this work, Tuttle encircled the walls of both gallery spaces with five continuous bands of color—each composed of a thin pencil line on top of which lay a tinted wash—that were arranged in such a way as to suggest an abstracted landscape: two bands of different-colored blue (manganese and cobalt) installed skyward, two kinds of yellow (a yellow ocher and an Indian yellow) located at the level of an imaginary horizon line, and a viridian green placed close to the floor. The bands were absolutely congruent with their architectural support and remained continuous as the wall surface rounded corners and accommodated a reception desk, windows, and doors. Riding on top of this environmental wall work were fifty-four low-relief sculptures and framed drawings installed above, below, and directly on the painted bars, looking much "like musical notes on the stave."[123] The assemblages were made from wood scrap found in New Mexico and spray-painted white, the drawings (entitled *You and Me* and *The Table and a Chair*) from toned pastel notebooks whose pages ranged in color from light to very dark, and whose surfaces Tuttle covered with energetic vectors of vividly colored brushstrokes.

plate 310

In its specific relationship to the site, its physical encompassing of the viewer, and its urging of a temporal passage across the space of two separate locations, *Inside the Still Pure Form* exhibits the classic characteristics of installation art, at precisely the moment when the medium reached full maturity.[124] Within Tuttle's own artistic trajectory, this development is a natural outgrowth of a constant and astute factoring of the artwork with its environment. Recent years have seen him take this skill and attention to the gallery milieu to new heights, creating some of the most personal and visually enthralling exhibitions of his career: displaying work in sky-high vertical swaths, spiral formations, or concurrently in two separate locales (as in a two-part exhibition located in Porto, Portugal, and nearby Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in 2002).[125] Tuttle is never one simply to hang new work; his shows consist of calculated arrangements that intentionally blur the line between artwork and exhibition design. (For a 1987 exhibition in Zurich, he circumscribed Annemarie Verna Galerie with a painted black

plates 354–55

plate 378

35 Installation view of the 2004 exhibition **Richard Tuttle: It's a Room for 3 People** at the Drawing Center, New York, showing **Village V** (2004)

36 Pages from **Artforum** magazine, February 2002, showing "Cosmic Relief," a sequence curated by Richard Tuttle featuring an essay by Robert Storr and artworks by Jean Fautrier, Agnes Martin, Constantin Brancusi, Carlo Crivelli, John Constable, and Peter Halley

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

"horizon line" above which he hung his work. His 2004 show at the Drawing Center in New York included a patterned mural backdrop for some suites of new work.) Tuttle was indoctrinated early on in the importance of controlling the exhibition space as well as "the hang"; Betty Parsons Gallery, after all, had been designed by Tony Smith, and its shows were sometimes curated by Newman. For his first show there, Tuttle had painted a wall gray to carry *Chelsea*; and his 1975 Whitney survey was rearranged twice after the exhibition opened to highlight the impact of different viewing conditions on individual artworks. In 1995, for the *North/South Axis* exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, Tuttle changed the installation continually in response to organized weekly audience discussions. plate 35

This last-mentioned show enacted the reciprocal relationship that Tuttle feels his work has with its audience. The exhibition space is of course central to him, but so is the human interaction that takes place within it. The importance Tuttle gives to the work's public dimension may be traced to his generational roots: artists who came into their own in the 1960s argued "against the location of meaning inside the work of art, where one presumes to find the personality of the artist."[126] Instead, meaning was located "outside the art object, in its physical setting or in viewers' responses, rather than 'inside' it, in the literary or psychological import of an image."[127] For Tuttle and his phenomenologically oriented peers, the work can only be known and completed—and continually renewed—in social experience, in the meaning brought to bear by the collective: "art, artist, collector, viewer, curator, collection, exhibition, and institution."[128]

In recent years Tuttle has returned with renewed concentration to the subject of the low relief or bas-relief—a structure much in the air at the time of his artistic education, and one that initially launched his career in the form of the constructed paintings. The bas-relief remains a special artistic and intellectual preoccupation for the artist, as is made evident by his choice of it as the focus of the pages he curated in the journal *Artforum* in February 2002.[129] This circular interest in the wall relief is Tuttle's privilege after a decades-long refinement of a distinctive visual language. Rather than following a linear trajectory over time, his work reveals an achronological complexity that plate 36

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

points to a strikingly early maturation of vision and program and a corresponding indifference to chronological "progress." He prefers instead to delve deep into chosen dominant strains in different periods, a method that has enriched rather than diminished his output.

Tuttle's long-standing and keen sensitivity to relief in all its subtle and precisely tuned permutations testifies to a desire to make "the realest of real things."[130] The relief form, whether it be a single, slightly raised surface or a thin overlapping of layers, occupies actual space and throws real shadows—aspects that underscore any pitch for true-to-life objecthood. The shaped relief lends an obdurate corporeality to the *Waferboards* (1996), which constituted Tuttle's first show at Sperone Westwater, New York, and were the last works to be exhibited against toned walls. These golden forms are made from a composite product of pressed aspenwood scraps, its vividly flecked surface enlivening avian shapes recalling feathers, wings, or warbling chests. Held by nails at their edges and cantilevered this way and that on the wall, the works seem to hover nervously between touching down and flying away, evoking the fanciful grace and lightness of birds and engendering a sense of animated disequilibrium that is wholly intrinsic to their content.

plates 322–25

Tuttle shortly followed these works with the overlapping plywood surfaces of *New Mexico, New York* (1998), a title that refers to the beginning of his dual-state residency.[131] The envelope-like shapes of these works invoke the idea of circulation from one place to another. Each is constructed from two layers of quarter-inch plywood, the top "flap" always smaller and made to run flush along one side of the larger substrate. The wood grain shows like moiré patterns through diluted acrylic paint, and the surfaces also reveal pencil outlines and painted shapes suggestive of rivers and paths—motifs, again, of passage and movement—riding independently

plates 37, 326–31

37 Richard Tuttle **New Mexico, New York, E, #4** 1998
Acrylic on plywood, 20 x 24 1/4 x 1/2 in.
Collection of Mimi and Peter Haas

of the relief structure. Tuttle took up the same conjunction of layered shallow relief and evocative visual patterning with *"20 Pearls"* (2003), in which two pieces of foam board are superimposed but reversed: as in the *Waferboards*, shaped outer contours readily engage the surrounding space and lend the works vitality and verve. Tuttle's palette has never been more sensual than it is here, as shapes by now familiar to his repertoire—leaf and square forms—receive candy-colored surfaces that make an unapologetic and immediate appeal to the senses in advance of any intellectual analysis. Aesthetic pleasure itself is the subject of these pieces, and it is distilled in their very realization. plates 146, 349–53

In many of his recent works, Tuttle takes as his primary format a plywood panel ten or eleven inches square and a quarter-inch deep. He arrived at these preferred dimensions while producing the eight prints of *Any Two Points* (1999): floating inside each of these square sheets of paper are embossed blocks of pure color that bring Tuttle's investigation of the low relief to its subtlest and most refined state.[132] These rectangular or square colored shapes and their dynamic geometric distribution across the surface of the paper led Tuttle to the compositional arrangements in *"Two with Any To"* (1999), where the embossed block is transformed into a painted piece of lumber, its location on the surface of the square wood panel varying from piece to piece. Completing the composition are painted shapes, raw wood-grain patterning, and the carefully choreographed shadows cast by the wood block, which interact with the other components: for example, in the way the shadow's outer edges may coincide (depending on the infinitely varied possibilities of the light source) with the outermost green points of the painted star in *"Two with Any To, #1."* Such material protrusions and their shadow plays reach ornate heights in *Ten, A* (2000), one of four works made from ten individual wood panels installed in pyramidal fashion low on the wall. plate 38 plates 341–46 plate 341 plate 347

With *Replace the Abstract Picture Plane IV* (1999), Tuttle assigned to the wood-relief structure a weighty ideological role.[133] Each of forty square fir panels is bisected vertically by a drawn pencil line, on either side of which a different color appears; the one on the right consistently has a greater optical weight, generating a kind of visual staccato when the works are installed as a group. The pieces are made to float slightly out in front of their white boxed frames, which in turn protrude from the supporting wall surface on quarter-inch plinths. The resultant impression is of a physical and optical advance and recession that refuses to settle on a single continuous plane. This jostling is a deliberate strategy to disable the perception of the work as an uninterrupted continuum, like a screen or a picture plane; instead, what one actually "sees," what Tuttle seeks to instantiate, is the disruption of the traditionally dominant position of the illusionistic picture plane in the task of interpreting the world. As Tuttle would have us be aware, the classic picture plane is an invention of Renaissance easel painting. So successful was this vehicle as a form of making the world understandable—both physically and ontologically—that Western culture has adapted the flat and unified plates 339–40

38 Richard Tuttle **Any Two Points, #6** 1999
Color aquatint with woodcut and drypoint, ed. of 25, 11 1/8 x 11 1/8 in.
Published by Crown Point Press

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

picture plane as the visual tool for all manner of visual and intellectual cognition, from the view out a car window, to the cinema screen, to the way we structure inner consciousness. We "see" things as if they existed as a unified, flat field. It is Tuttle's contention that this way of perceiving and processing the world is outmoded and limits our capacity to fully understand ourselves and the world around us,[134] and it is therefore his ambition to create works that confound and disrupt inherited ideas about what constitutes a picture plane or image, and to undermine their primacy. Tuttle's project, beyond this particular work, is to undo, so as to rethink, the visual tools we have invented and indoctrinated ourselves to comprehend by. This is the meaning of the title *Replace the Abstract Picture Plane*, in which the verb should be taken in the imperative—an exhortation to each of us to upend our received pictorial habits and allow for a more visceral and individual engagement of the senses "to bring about an awareness of consciousness,"[135] which in turn would place us squarely in the here and now.

Tuttle has stated, "I am placing in a world that is mostly concerned with recognition a thing whose primary involvement is perception."[136] His works are arguments in favor of a precognitive mode of perception that would allow one to see the world without the constraint of perceptual and intellectual habits. The artist—and the viewer in turn—engages in an ever-present and direct facing of experience, one that takes place prior to those operations of mind that would define our observations and perforce also standardize and even dictate our perceptions and responses. This activity reawakens us to a fresh experience of the palpable present: the sympathetic observer of Tuttle's art is invited to share in an attitude of enhanced attention that is subsequently available for transposition, from the art object to the world at large, every day. Tuttle's work proposes and fosters acts of the imagination that return to the viewer the ability to associate creatively with the world, to undertake the movement toward meaning that is at the core of art and human experience.

The idea of an art providing a direct experience of reality, as opposed to a secondary, representational one, is one of modernism's most powerful and enduring aspirations. Postmodern criticality has held this old-fashioned and indeed impossible ideal under suspicion, particularly since the 1970s and 1980s. What gives Tuttle's efforts in this arena their sense of legitimacy is the fact that his approach keeps well in check the regressive bluster and forceful assertions of absolute certainties that have traditionally accompanied such undertakings. In his quest to figure out "how to maintain the achievements of modernism, particularly in a world dead to them,"[137] Tuttle recovers modernism's best qualities in a subversive, deliberately nongeneral, and imperfect sublime. Not for Tuttle the creation of a single, unadulterated, and absolute "truth"; instead, each piece constitutes a palpable, believable, seemingly inevitable "little truth," a graceful and fearless aesthetic presence in front of which one encounters not a depicted image but the thing itself. The artist is "after essences," certainly; "not streamlined Platonic ones," however, "but informal, folded, asymmetrical, lumpy, hairy little entelechies."[138] This universe of small truths addresses the viewer on the spot in a continually constructed present that helps us to feel what it is to *be*.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, “A Universe of Small Truths,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

NOTES

Warm thanks are extended to Richard Tuttle for undergoing numerous conversations and interviews with unstinting thoughtfulness and grace; to Tom Shapiro for his unflagging and essential support; and to Chad Coerver, Karen Levine, Joseph N. Newland, and Peter Samis for their sage and elegant intellectual contributions. To my expert and generous readers, David Frankel and Sylvia Wolf, I am profoundly grateful.

1 “Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself,” *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 534.

2 Richard Tuttle, quoted in “Work Is Justification for the Excuse,” in *Documenta 5* (Kassel, Germany: Museum Fridericianum, 1972), section 17, page 77.

3 Richard Tuttle, quoted in Dierk Stemmler, “Ten Designs for a Poster, 1985,” in *Richard Tuttle* (Mönchengladbach, Germany: Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, 1985), 82.

4 A passage Tuttle once selected from the writings of René Descartes speaks eloquently to the artist’s own work: “What is most to be noticed in all this is the generation of the animal spirits, which are like a very subtle wind, or rather like a very pure and lively flame.” Quoted in *Plastic History* (Munich: Wassermann Galerie, 1992), unpaginated.

5 Here I am also deliberately invoking Tuttle’s first book, *Story with Seven Characters* (1965; pl. 366). The glyphs or “characters” Tuttle creates and deploys across the pages of this book embody the various definitions of the word *character*: they act like personalities in a story, and they are “eccentric” as well as ideogrammatic in form.

6 Richard Tuttle, unpublished interview by Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, 25–26 October and 12 November 1990, courtesy Richard Tuttle and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge. My thanks to Susan Harris for generously sharing this transcript with me.

7 Tuttle touched on the topic of Calvinist doctrine in a lecture titled “The Defense of Puritanism,” given at Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, in June 2003.

8 Briony Fer uses this term to describe the work of Eva Hesse. See her essay “The Work of Salvage: Eva Hesse’s Latex Works,” in *Eva Hesse*, ed. Elisabeth Sussman (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 94. The redeployment of detritus was also practiced by several other artists of Tuttle’s generation, including Barry Le Va and Robert Morris.

9 See Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Icon Editions, 1979), and my master’s thesis, “The Basis for a Relationship between Eastern Philosophy and Luminist Works” (Columbia University, 1985).

10 Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Transcendentalist,” in *The Portable Emerson*, ed. Carol Bode, in collaboration with Malcolm Cowley, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1981), 93.

11 Passage selected by Richard Tuttle from the work of Henri Bergson, in *Richard Tuttle. △s: Works 1964–1985 / Two Pinwheels: Works 1964–1985* (London: Coracle Press / Institute of Contemporary Arts; Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery, 1985), readings 3.

12 Richard Tuttle, transcript of lecture, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, 4 August 1995; Richard Tuttle, “I Do Believe That Chaos and Form Are...It’s the Same,” in *Richard Tuttle: Chaos, die/the Form*, ed. Jochen Poetter (Baden, Germany: Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 1993), 173.

13 Richard Tuttle, in *Richard Tuttle: North/South Axis and the Poetry of Form*, exhibition brochure (Santa Fe: Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, 1995), unpaginated.

14 Lucy R. Lippard, “Intersections,” in *Flyktpunkter / Vanishing Points* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1984), 11.

15 This general condition was best summarized by Susan Sontag in her 1966 book *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays*, rev. ed. (repr., New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986).

16 David Batchelor, *Minimalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66. Minimalism’s productively indeterminate ontology would stand as an important precedent and model for Tuttle, who as a fledgling artist would have recognized the pitch for freedom and independence in the slightly older artists’ resistance to traditional categories and efforts toward self-definition.

17 *Black, White, and Gray* was on view January 9 through February 9, 1964, at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford. See James Meyer, “Introduction to the ‘minimal’ 1: ‘Black, White, and Gray,’” in *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 77–81.

18 Barbara Rose, “ABC Art,” *Art in America* 53 (October–November 1965): 57–69. At the same time, Tuttle’s paper cubes announced the disassembling of the cube that would become a characteristic of Postminimalism, additional examples of which would encompass Richard Serra’s *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)* (1969) and Hesse’s *Metronomic Irregularity* (1966), among others.

It should be noted that Rose dates the paper cubes to 1963, a year earlier than indicated in my essay. Tuttle does seem to have begun work on other paper cubes in late 1963, but the particular set exhibited here is ascribed to 1964.

19 My observations on the aesthetic strategy of touch as a way to achieve a primary experience in art owe a great debt to the writings of Richard Shiff. See in particular his “Constructing Physicality,” *Art Journal* 50 (Spring 1991), 42–47; and “Autonomy, Anatomy, Actuality,” in *Robert Mangold* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 7–56. See also “Donald Judd: Fast Thinking,” in *Donald Judd: Late Work* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2000), 4–23; and “Bridget Riley: The Edge of Animation,” in *Bridget Riley*, ed. Paul Moorhouse (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), 81–91.

20 This also explains Tuttle’s forays into designing clothing-sculptures, such as his *Pants* of 1979 (pl. 311), which engage the wearer’s whole body at a visceral level.

21 Quoted in Michael Auping, “On Relationships,” in *Agnes Martin / Richard Tuttle* (Fort Worth: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 1998), 81.

22 Richard Tuttle, conversation with the author, 12 March 2005.

23 See Barbara Haskell, *Agnes Martin* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art / Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 104.

24 Quoted in Auping, “On Relationships,” 81; conversation with the author, 12 March 2005.

25 Richard Tuttle, “What Does One Look at in an Agnes Martin Painting? Nine Musings on the Occasion of Her Ninetieth Birthday,” *American Art* 16 (Fall 2002): 92.

26 Agnes Martin, quoted in Haskell, *Agnes Martin*, 135.

27 See Lee Hall, *Betty Parsons: Artist, Dealer, Collector* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991). The Parsons stable included, among others, Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, Ad Reinhardt, Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Hans Hoffmann, and Jackson Pollock. Pollock’s three landmark shows of 1947–50 were all held there.

28 Ann Temkin, “Barnett Newman on Exhibition,” in *Barnett Newman*, ed. Ann Temkin (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 30.

29 Ibid., 37.

30 Thomas B. Hess, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, “Profiles: A Keeper of the Treasure,” *The New Yorker*, 9 June 1975, 60.

31 Tuttle, lecture, Skowhegan.

32 Tuttle originally made approximately one hundred and fifty constructed paintings but subsequently destroyed around half of these, and there are about sixty known works at the present time.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

33 Donald Judd, quoted in Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), 155.

34 *Gestalt* is a term used in psychology to denote a whole, fully graspable thing; even when seen from a provisional and partial point of view, we infer its wholeness because its form is so basic. The experience is that "one sees and immediately 'believes' that the pattern of one's mind corresponds to the existential fact of the object" (Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part 1," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993], 6). See also Kenneth Baker, *Minimalism: Art of Circumstance* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 71.

35 Quoted in Shiff, "Donald Judd: Fast Thinking," 5.

36 Donald Judd, "Specific Objects" (1965), in *Minimalism*, ed. James Meyer (New York: Phaidon, 2000), 207–10.

37 It is interesting to point out that while both works are modular compositions in the minimalist vein, Tuttle's piece is assembled from separate physical units, one year before the appearance of Judd's trademark vertical stacks composed of unlinked, identical relief elements.

38 I say this even as I wish to qualify my point on Minimalism's reductivist tendencies in light of recent studies by David Batchelor, Hal Foster, and Alex Potts, among others, all of whom have highlighted Minimalism's embrace of sensual optical effects that approach illusionism.

39 Lawrence Alloway, *Pattern Art: 20th Anniversary 1946–1966*, exhibition brochure (New York: Betty Parsons Gallery, 1966), unpaginated; an exhibition commemorating the anniversary of Betty Parsons Gallery. One should especially acknowledge Kelly's shaped, hybrid painting-sculptures of the 1950s as precedents for Tuttle's own explorations, though Tuttle did not respond to the roots of Kelly's reductivist abstractions in a close observation of the real world.

40 According to the artist, while making works such as *Silver Picture*, he "was thinking about giving line dimensionality, and wondering if a painting could act like a line instead of being the ground for a line" (quoted in Auping, "On Relationships," 82). This ambition carried over to later works such as *Memento, Five, Grey and Yellow* (2002; pl. 354), which Tuttle describes as "a line and a form." Tuttle credits the invention of the concrete line as a real material condition of a work to Carl Andre, as well as to Andre's linear sculptures made of abutting bricks and the way the elements connect in his carpetlike floor sculptures made from metal squares. These find correspondences in Tuttle pieces such as *Chelsea* (pl. 41), in which individual panels painted mauve, pale green, and salmon are yoked together to generate a single object.

41 Gordon B. Washburn, *Richard Tuttle: Constructed Paintings*, exhibition brochure (New York: Betty Parsons Gallery, 1965), unpaginated.

42 The first body of "tin pieces" numbered around forty, the next three were identical in number (twenty-six) and in configuration but not in depth, with the last suite being the thinnest. This final group, the only one to remain intact after its showing at Galerie Schmela in 1968, is the one included in this exhibition (see pls. 56–57).

43 James R. Mellow, review, *Art International* 11 (20 April 1967): 61.

44 Richard Tuttle, artist's statement, in *Overview* (Crown Point Press newsletter), June 2004, 1–2. It should be said that there is a long history of radical artistic experimentation with forms of language (with which Tuttle is well versed), particularly in the first decades of twentieth century avant-garde practice, which saw such artist-ideographers as Jean Arp, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, and Kurt Schwitters stretch the possibilities of art through calligraphic abstraction. Interesting in connection to Tuttle is that the exhibition Barnett Newman organized for Betty Parsons Gallery's inaugural show in 1947 was titled *The Ideographic Picture*; in the accompanying text Newman advocated for the meaningful nonverbal character of a visual symbol (see Temkin, *Barnett Newman*, 30). More recently, Cy Twombly and Brice Marden have explored this territory (see *Abstraction, Gesture, Ecriture: Paintings from the Daros Collection* [Zurich: Scalo, 1999]).

45 Richard Tuttle, *40 Tage: Mit Einem Text des Künstlers / Zeichnungen* (Bonn: Galerie Erhard Klein; Vienna: Galerie Hubert Winter, 1989), 42.

46 Smith, archives, "The Pattern of Organic Life in America," ca. 1943, quoted in Doris von Drathen, "Away from Categories: An Alternative View of Tony Smith and Carl Andre," *Art Press* 224 (May 1997): 44.

47 Robert Smithson, quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), vii.

48 Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 5 (June 1967): 79–83.

49 LeWitt's "Ideas alone can be works of art.... All ideas need not be made physical" was seconded by Lawrence Weiner, who in 1968 pronounced that his works "need not be built," since the work already permanently existed as language.

50 Robert Smithson, "Language to Be Looked at and/or Things to be Read" (1967), in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 61.

51 Quoted in Christine Jenny Egan, "Drift—Transformationen im Werk Richard Tuttles, 1965/1975" (Ph.D. diss., Kunsthistorisches Seminar, Basel, 2001).

52 Tuttle's joint endeavors with contemporary poets include projects with Simon Cutts, Larry Fagin, Barbara Guest, Charles Bernstein, Ilma Rakusa, and Anne Waldman.

53 See Katy Siegel's "As Far as Language Goes" in this volume.

54 Lippard, "Intersections," 24.

55 Tuttle's *Paper Octagonals* were included in an important early exhibition called *Using Walls (Indoors)*, at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1970, devoted to wall works that could be executed on the spot. (The exhibition was shut down after the opening by a majority vote of the participating artists in protest of the Vietnam War.) It is worth mentioning that the *Paper Octagonals* were first shown as a complete group at Clocktower Gallery in 1973, its first year of programming, and that Tuttle participated in P.S. 1's inaugural exhibition in 1976. Both organizations announced a new kind of exhibition situation for the 1970s that originated in Europe and made available unusual and highly inflected environments that further galvanized artists to be situational in their art-making. The 1970s gave birth to a whole movement—"site-specific art"—that was characterized by an immediate reference to, if not a merging with, its physical location. The central impact of the gallery space on the artwork, and the recognition of it as a nonneutral container to be engaged directly, was pervasive and has been well summarized in Brian O'Doherty's important book *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986).

56 Scott Burton, "Notes on the New," in *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form: Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information*, by Harald Szeemann (Bern, Switzerland: Kunsthalle Bern, 1969). European critics were equally impressed by Tuttle's groundbreaking work: Germano Celant saw the cloth pieces as part of a strain of "American 'Cool' Painting," and gave the work a special mention for "breaki[ing] the rule of the rigidity of the placement of all of the art that has been seen up till now in favor of a principle of multidirectionality and ubiquity" (Celant, "La 'pittura fredda' americana / American 'Cool' Painting," *Domus* 523 [June 1973]: 49.

57 See Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *Modern Painting, Drawing, & Sculpture: Collected by Emily and Joseph Pulitzer, Jr.*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 1988), 902.

58 Robert M. Murdock, *Richard Tuttle* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1971), unpaginated. More recently, Tuttle has said of such work, "It was drawn as a three-dimensional figure in space, which was two-dimensionalized to its outline, so that the wrinkles accounted, I suspect, for its loss of three-dimensionality. I was interested in how it completes itself visually after such a loss" (*Richard Tuttle: Community* [Chicago: Arts Club of Chicago, 1999], 8). I would like to thank Peter Freeman for his helpful observations on this topic.

59 Richard Tuttle to Dr. Jost Herbig, letter, 13 February 1973, in *Bilder Objekte Filme Konzepte* (Munich: Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 1973), 160.

60 Robert Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism* (New York: Out of London Press, 1977), 106. Pincus-Witten is credited with coining the term *Postminimalism*, which, as with any greatly useful rubric, is also limiting in that it places perhaps too much emphasis on the works' relationship to and reaction against Minimalism. Pincus-Witten's *Postminimalism* remains among the most important summations of artistic practices from 1966 to 1976. Also indispensable to any study of Postminimalism is *The New Sculpture 1965–75: Between Geometry and Gesture*, ed. Richard Armstrong and Richard Marshall (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1990); and, more recently, Cornelia H. Butler's *Afterimage: Drawing through Process* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), both of which give Tuttle central focus. See also Carter Ratcliff, *Out of the Box: The Reinvention of Art 1965–1975* (New York: Allworth Press / School of Visual Arts, 2000).

61 This term comes from the title of Robert Morris's celebrated essay, published in *Artforum* in 1968, where he wrote that "Recently, materials other than rigid industrial ones have begun to show up.... A direct investigation of the properties of these materials is in progress" (reprinted in Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily*, 46).

62 "The Avant-Garde: Subtle, Cerebral, Elusive," *Time*, 22 November 1968, 70–77.

63 John Perreault, "A Healthy Pluralism," *Village Voice*, 17 February 1972, 22.

64 "Tuttle has managed to carve out a style and a form that is all his own and I have a feeling that these new and very controversial works will establish him as a young artist to be reckoned with. They are very far out. They are simple but not simple-minded. They are not beautiful. But they are in some sense outrageously 'poetic'" (John Perreault, "Simple, Not Simple-Minded," *Village Voice*, 18 January 1968, 16–17).

65 Marcia Tucker and James Monte, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1969), 28. In this way Tuttle also took up and simultaneously subverted the explorations in Color Field or "stain" painting—thin pigment poured onto unprimed canvas to merge paint and support—being undertaken by Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski.

66 Robert Pincus-Witten, "The Disintegration of Minimalism: Five Pictorial Sculptors," in *Eye to Eye* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), 119–22. See also Richard Armstrong, "Between Geometry and Gesture," in *The New Sculpture*, 14.

67 Proof of this midpoint stance lies in Tuttle's exhibition record: a *Wire Piece* was included in *Arte come arte* (in Milan, Italy, in 1973), predominantly a painting show, while a cloth piece appeared in the tellingly titled *Door beeldouwers gemaakt / Made by Sculptors* in Amsterdam in 1978. The former exhibition aligned Tuttle with painters Jo Baer, Kelly, Robert Mangold, Marden, Martin, Newman, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Ryman, and Frank Stella; the latter primarily with Andre, Joel Shapiro, and Serra. See *Arte come arte* (Milan: Centro Comunitario di Brera, 1973); and *Door beeldouwers gemaakt / Made by Sculptors* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1978).

68 Burton, "Notes on the New," unpaginated.

69 Perreault, "Simple," 16–17.

70 See, for example, Carter Ratcliff's "New York Letter," in *Art International* 14 (20 May 1976): "Ryman engages the complexities of perception and matter which condition scale, light, and depth, and this links him to Tuttle and Marden" (p. 76). Interestingly, Hesse coupled Ryman and Tuttle in her journal: "Painting can be extended to Ryman, Tuttle. If Art seemingly had rules they're all temporary and there to be broken" (quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, *Eva Hesse* [New York: New York University Press, 1976], 85).

71 Of profound influence to this generation of artists was Jackson Pollock's scaling up and freeing up of drawing as he transformed line into painted skeins on mural-size grounds. In his wake, Tuttle and others were given license to transfer drawing's parameters and methods to other media. My use of "audacious yet humble" paraphrases Scott Burton's comment in "Time on Their Hands." *ARTnews* 68 (Summer 1969): 43.

72 It should be noted that these works appeared at a time of enormous interest in the body as a medium in advanced art practices, including Body and Performance art as well as experimental dance (see Cornelia H. Butler's essay in this catalogue). Marcia Tucker has described the *Wire Pieces* as "a way of drawing with the body" (Tucker, interview by the author, 7 January 2002).

73 "The Wire Pieces are an experiment to surrender authorship, how to make something and to be as little involved" (Tuttle, "I Do Believe That Chaos and Form Are," 172).

74 Julio González wrote "to draw in space" in 1932. See Josephine Withers, *Julio González: Sculpture in Iron* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 134.

75 Richard Tuttle, "A Love Letter to Lucio Fontana," in *Lucio Fontana* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1988), 60–65. Tuttle created a room for González sculptures within an exhibition of his own work in 1992 at the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, Spain.

76 Tuttle and Hesse were working at the outer perimeters of a generational concern with creating emphatically provisional work: "The ancient notion that life is short and art long has been challenged by artists as diverse as Richard Serra, Bill Bollinger, Richard Tuttle, Bruce Nauman and Robert Barry, all of whom create in some way 'short art'" (Burton, "Time on Their Hands," 40).

77 Bill Barette, *Eva Hesse Sculpture* (New York: Timken Publishers, 1989), 212. Although Hesse knew that the materials she was working with would deteriorate, it is unclear whether she would have accepted the degree to which her pieces have actually degenerated. See Ann Temkin (introduction) and Chad Coerver (ed.), "Uncertain Mandate: A Roundtable Discussion on Conservation Issues," in *Eva Hesse* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

78 *Richard Tuttle: Portland Works 1976* (Cologne: Galerie Karsten Greve; Boston: Thomas Segal Gallery, 1988), 9.

79 Richard Tuttle, conversation with the author, 21 November 2003.

80 Collage was famously described by Henri Matisse as "drawing with scissors" (Bernice Rose, *Drawing Now* [New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976], 11).

81 Pamela M. Lee, "Some Kinds of Duration: The Temporality of Drawing as Process Art," in Butler, *Aftermage*, 37. In describing a print that includes a drawn pencil line, Tuttle has said, "I liked how it was expressing something like past time pressing against present time" (quoted in Ronny H. Cohen, "Minimal Prints," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 21 [May–June 1990]: 46). The incorporation of real time and duration into the artwork was of course of central interest to artists who matured in the 1960s; see Briony Fer, "Some Translucent Substance, or the Trouble with Time," in *Time and the Image*, by Carolyn Bailey Gill (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000).

82 Richard Tuttle, in *Richard Tuttle* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1979), unpaginated.

83 "A situation" is Ryman's term for the ingredients of lighting conditions and wall textures necessary to bring a work to final fruition. See Yve-Alain Bois, "Ryman's Lab," in *Abstraction, Gesture, Ecriture*, 108.

84 See also Shiff, "Donald Judd: Fast Thinking," 11.

85 Quoted in Susan Harris, "Finding a Way to Go On: Tuttle in the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection," in *The Poetry of Form: Richard Tuttle, Drawings from the Vogel Collection* (Amsterdam: Institute of Contemporary Art; Valencia, Spain: Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, 1992), 49.

86 Christo's *Running Fence* was installed in 1976. Shapiro's first exhibition of small geometric configurations evocative of houses, chairs, boats, and coffins in 1973. Two 1976 articles in *Artforum* were devoted to the topic of small-size sculpture. "Notes on Small Sculpture" by Carter Ratcliff in April, and "The Size of Non-Size" by Douglas Davis in December; both pointed to "a flood" of small sculptures saturating the art market then. According to another writer of the time, "Tuttle has been at the forefront of the movement towards smaller works of art" (Ann-Sargent Wooster, review, *ARTnews* 77 [April 1978]: 156).

87 Marcia Tucker, *Richard Tuttle* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1975), 7. Tucker's essay remains among the very best writings on Tuttle's work.

88 "Small work is generally not thought of as environmental, but Tuttle's 'objects' are a means of focusing us to see the space they are represented in. It is impossible not to confront the bare cube of the room: the gallery floor and radiator grill in the process of looking for/at these small works" (Wooster, review, *ARTnews*, 156).

89 David Bourdon, "A Redefinition of Sculpture," in *Carl Andre: Sculpture, 1959–1977* (New York: Jaap Rietman, 1978), 28.

90 Robert Pincus-Witten, interview by the author, 9 January 2002.

91 Marcia Tucker, interview by the author, 7 January 2002.

92 See Adam D. Weinberg's case study and Robert Storr's essay, both in this volume.

93 Hilton Kramer, "Our Venice Offering—More a Syllabus than a Show," *New York Times*, 2 May 1976.

94 Richard Tuttle, "Tuttle on Martin," in *Agnes Martin / Richard Tuttle*, 10.

95 Jurgen Glaesemer, "Appendix III: A Talk with Richard Tuttle," in *List of Drawing Material of Richard Tuttle & Appendices*, by Gianfranco Verna (Zurich: Annemarie Verna Galerie, 1979), 352.

96 Richard Tuttle, quoted in Auping, "On Relationships," 83.

97 Published in "Kabinet Overholland," *Bulletin Stedelijk Museum* (June 2001); unpaginated (emphasis added).

98 Richard Tuttle, quoted in Guy Cross, "Interview with Richard Tuttle," *The Magazine* (Santa Fe), 3 April 1995, 12.

99 *Richard Tuttle: Small Sculptures of the 70s* (Zurich: Annemarie Verna Galerie, 1998), 24.

100 Peter Frank, review, *ARTnews* 75 (January 1976): 126.

101 Quoted in Paul Gardner, "Taking the Plunge," *ARTnews* 97 (February 1998): 112.

102 "I would first want to say that a mental image comes from behind a surface...before it *appears* in our minds.... [W]hat is its outside representation?" (Richard Tuttle, "Notes for Sleep Time," in *Richard Tuttle: Sprengel Museum Hannover* [Hannover, Germany: Sprengel Museum Hannover, 1990], unpaginated). "I normally will have an idea that comes to mind and that would be in terms of colors, a passage, or rhythms of force, and then my problem is to go and try to make that in the real world" (transcription of filmed interview with Richard Tuttle, Indianapolis Museum of Art, summer 1993).

103 Barbara Haskell, Marcia Tucker, and Patterson Sims, introduction to *1977 Biennial Exhibition: Contemporary American Art* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1977), 6.

104 Pepe Karmel, "Oedipus Wrecks: New York in the 1980s," in *Jasper Johns to Jeff Koons: Four Decades of Art from the Broad Collections*, by Stephanie Barron and Lynn Zelevansky et al. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 114.

105 Tuttle is well familiar with the historical tradition of artist's frames, the intention of which has been to blur the boundary between artwork and architectural container—Seurat's painted frames being prime examples.

106 Quoted in "Richard Tuttle: Tre Mostre a Roma alla Galleria Ugo Ferranti, 1975, 1977, 1978," *Domus* 591 (February 1979): 47.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, "A Universe of Small Truths," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 17-64

107 Tuttle's artistic sojourns began in 1968 with a six-month visit to Japan. A 1969 trip to Turkey with Parsons and Washburn resulted in his first "travel sketches," which led to such works as *Drawing Developed from Travel-Sketches Made in Turkey* (pl. 154). To this day, Tuttle relishes making drawings in hotel rooms, resulting in works such as *Sustained Color* (pls. 266–86).

108 For the source of the first quote see note 13; the second quote is from a conversation between Tuttle and the author, 20 March 2005.

109 Such materials and organizing principles are reminiscent of the roots of the assemblage tradition initiated by the cubist collage—specifically, by Pablo Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning* of 1912, which launched the incorporation of materials drawn from the real world into the plane of pictorial illusion, a strategy taken to experimental heights by the Russian constructivist reliefs to which Tuttle's work bears formal resemblances.

110 As such, his assemblages refused the patina of a historicist strain that was in evidence during this period (one thinks of the paintings of Ross Bleckner or the photography of Mike and Doug Starn).

111 See Briony Fer, *On Abstract Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 19, and the chapter "Imagining a Point of Origin: Malevich and Suprematism."

112 Robert Storr, *Philip Guston* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), 38. Tuttle's pieces are also undoubtedly informed by the concept of *wabi sabi*, which describes a traditional Japanese aesthetic sensibility based on an appreciation of the transient beauty of the physical world, rooted in the ancient Buddhist valuing of ephemerality. (Though characteristically, by his own admission, he would value the opposite as well.)

113 "Floor drawings" is the name Tuttle gave to four groups and two single works, comprising a total of twenty sculptures, that were first brought together for a 1991 exhibition in Amsterdam. The first group of six sculptures, titled by number (as in *Six*), was initially shown in 1987 at Blum Helman Gallery in Los Angeles; a second group of five sculptures, *There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find*, was shown at Blum Helman Warehouse in New York in 1988; *Turquoise*, consisting of three sculptures, premiered at Galerie Meert Rihoux in Brussels in 1988; and *Sentences* comprises four sculptures first exhibited in a 1989 group show at Sperone Westwater in New York. An additional sculpture, *Sand-Tree 7*, was initially exhibited at Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf in 1988, while the artist recalls that *There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find VI* debuted at Michael Klein Gallery in New York the same year. For more on Tuttle's floor drawings, see Susan Harris's superb essay "Twenty Floor Drawings," in *Richard Tuttle* (Amsterdam: Institute of Contemporary Art; The Hague: Sdu, 1991).

114 This is to paraphrase Tony Smith, whose large-scale sculpture Tuttle helped build and still admires. See Michael Brenson, "Remarks on *Moondog*," in *Tony Smith: Moondog* (New York: Paula Cooper Gallery, 1997), unpaginated.

115 Donald Kuspit, review, *Artforum* 27 (February 1989): 127.

116 These are the same materials that Tuttle has turned to for his largest sculptures to date. *Replace the Abstract Picture Plane I* (1996; pl. 30) and *Memento, Five, Grey and Yellow* (2002; pl. 354).

117 Tuttle was not alone in his interests: the mid-1980s saw a number of cultural practitioners—artists, philosophers, art historians—propose a correspondence between the postmodern period and the Baroque. The philosophy of the Baroque era resurfaced as a focus of semantics and literary theory thanks to the work of Dutch scholar Mieke Bal (see, for example, her *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999]) and French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (especially his 1986 *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* [repr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993]). Artists like Belgian sculptor Lili Dujourie and American painter David Reed examined the Baroque's visual tropes in their own work, as did Frank Stella, whose 1986 book *Working Space* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) focused on Caravaggio's treatment of pictorial space, and whose large-scale metal-relief paintings of the mid-1980s bear a superficial resemblance to Tuttle's assemblages in their treatment of interleaving forms that half-depict, half-objectify space.

118 Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, 30.

119 Preceding two quotations from "Goings On about Town: Art," *The New Yorker*, 27 January 1992, 10.

120 Michael Kimmelman, "At the Met with Richard Tuttle: Influence Cast in Stone," *New York Times*, 14 May 1999.

121 Michael Duncan, review, *Art in America* 83 (September 1995): 106. European reports concurred: "[Tuttle] is certainly in vogue with young artists and students at present" (Deborah Parsons, "Material Metaphysics," *London Student*, 3 December 1996, 16).

122 The group of works shown at Mary Boone Gallery, entitled *Fiction Fish*, is one of three bodies of line pieces Tuttle produced. The second group of line pieces was exhibited at Laura Carpenter Fine Art in Santa Fe in 1992, the third and last at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden in Germany in 1993.

123 Ingrid Schaffner, review, *Artscribe* 87 (Summer 1991): 68.

124 Installation art first began to gather momentum in the mid-1970s. By 1990 it was established as a genre and became the focus of the 1991–92 exhibition *Dislocations* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and of the 1991 Carnegie International in Pittsburgh.

125 In relation to Tuttle's exhibition practices, one should mention as well his artist-curated shows of collections, a popular museological practice beginning in the mid-1980s. Tuttle's ventures in this area began with a 1988 exhibition at New York's P.S. 1, in which he combined his artwork with his own collection of nineteenth-century glass. Tuttle was subsequently invited to exhibit his work within the permanent-collection galleries of the Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany, home to Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau* environment, an obvious and important precedent for Tuttle's work (Tuttle was asked to hang his *System of Color* alongside Schwitters's collages [pl. 231]). In 1992 Tuttle and the curator Alma Ruempol organized *Oxyderood / Red Oxide* at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam: using the color of red oxide as the unifying feature, Tuttle chose fifty objects from his private collection of ceramics, textiles, and glass and combined these with fifty objects from the museum's archeological holdings and fifty of his own artworks. In 2004 Tuttle curated a show of vintage and contemporary Indonesian textiles in Santa Fe (pl. 383) and an exhibition in Miami, *Beauty-in-Advertising*, that incorporated selections from the permanent collection of the Wolfsonian—Florida International University (pl. 384).

126 James Cuno, *Minimalism and Post-Minimalism: Drawing Distinctions* (Hanover, NH: Hood Art Museum, Dartmouth College, 1990), 10.

127 Baker, *Minimalism*, 21.

128 Jennifer Gross, in *Richard Tuttle: Community*, 24.

129 Richard Tuttle, "Artists Curate: Cosmic Relief," *Artforum* 40 (February 2002): 116–21. This article highlighted Tuttle's eclectic pantheon of masters of the "almost low-relief form," including Constantin Brancusi, John Constable, Carlo Crivelli, Jean Fautrier, Arshile Gorky, Peter Halley, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

130 Ibid., 117.

131 Tuttle later subtitled this body of work *Conjunction of Color*, to place emphasis on the meeting of colors that takes place on these surfaces ("Richard Tuttle, 19 February 1998," in *Inside the Studio: Two Decades of Talks with Artists in New York*, ed. Judith Olch Richards [New York: Independent Curators International, 2004], 190–93).

132 It is unfortunately beyond the scope of either this essay or its exhibition to examine the significant work Tuttle has undertaken in the area of printmaking, beginning in 1973 with his first print, *In Praise of Economic Determinism*, published by Brooke Alexander. As with Tuttle's books, the prints are important as artworks unto themselves and as aesthetic stepping stones in the development of work in other media. Just as essential to Tuttle's work as an artist is the collaborative nature of the printmaking process, as opposed to the solitary practice of the studio. On this account, Kathan Brown of Crown Point Press in San Francisco has proven a particularly vital colleague for Tuttle, as have Alexander, Greg Burnet, Bill Goldston, and the staff of printers at ULAE in Bay Shore, New York.

133 This work is one of four separate pieces, each titled *Replace the Abstract Picture Plane* and distinguished by a roman numeral, that were made over the course of a three-year project of multiple exhibitions at the Kunsthaus Zug in Switzerland beginning in 1996.

134 "The picture plane needs replacing like everything else does. Like replacing the car battery when it goes weak." Richard Tuttle, quoted in Kathan Brown, "Richard Tuttle: Any Two Points," *Overview* [Crown Point Press newsletter], May 2000.

135 Richard Tuttle, conversation with the author, 15 December 2003.

136 Quoted in Richard Whelan, review, *ARTnews* 78 (Summer 1979): 186.

137 Richard Tuttle, "The Good and the Colors," in *Richard Tuttle, le bonheur et la couleur* (Bordeaux, France: CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 1986), 35.

138 Thomas B. Hess, "Private Art Where the Public Works," *New York*, 13 October 1975, 84. The title of my essay is taken from a comment Richard Tuttle made to the author on 30 October 2002, when he described his oeuvre as "an infinity of small truths."

39 **Untitled** 1964 each 3 x 3 x 3 in.

Shiff, Richard, “It Shows,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

by Richard Shiff

IT SHOWS

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

In the field of the dream...what characterizes the images is it shows.... *Our position in the dream is profoundly that of someone who does not see. The subject does not see where it is leading, he follows.... He may say to himself,* It's only a dream. *But he does not apprehend himself as someone who says to himself*—After all, I am the consciousness of this dream.

JACQUES LACAN, 1964[1]

One person can make work for twenty-five years, and in the middle, something happens, and there's no relationship between the early and the late work.... We always want to think a human being has this connection, but the truth is the human being has no connection.... I'd really like to see the end of time or have an experience outside of time.... I'm not leading, I'm following. I'm following something that is happening.

RICHARD TUTTLE, 1986, 1990[2]

On February 19, 1964, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan spoke about the curious vividness of dreams. To distinguish oneiric experience from other states of awareness, he set dreaming into a linguistic order, resorting to the impersonal voice of "it shows." In a dream, things happen—they just happen—including the subject's own acts of observation and response. Although the subject performs with apparent purpose within the dream-event, the dreamer feels removed from conscious intention and rationality. The most acute sense of the split between dreamer and subject-of-the-dream occurs at the moment of waking. A dream catches the dreamer outside the self, somewhere between the security of understanding what happens and the equal security of being aware of not understanding (knowing this for a fact). Aspects of intention, deliberation, expectation, and surprise show; yet the dreamer fails to perceive what the subject living the dream must know. Having identified with the emotional content of the situation, the dreamer still cannot acknowledge, "I am the consciousness of this dream."

In a waking state, we can assume a certain distance, regarding the self as an object of speculation, perhaps to ask, "Why did I just do that?" or, "Who am I? Who can this person be?" The dreamer's disconnection is different: involuntary rather than voluntary. The split between the one who watches the dream and the one who performs it escapes the control of ordinary discourse, the language we use to step into objectivity. Dreaming, we cannot set a first-person "I" in the position of a third person "he" or "she" as a thought experiment, organizing rational alternatives for possible action. We feel, "I'm not leading, I'm following."

Reacting to examples of his art, Richard Tuttle is sometimes now convinced, "I did not make this."[3] In 1975, he stated that he wanted work that looked "ecstatic, as though the artist had never been there."[4] To

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

be ecstatic is to be outside oneself, untethered, disconnected: "I can look at the creative process in myself like I'm another person."[5] Tuttle must know that he produces his work in its material sense, yet he cannot fully acknowledge himself as the consciousness guiding its effects. His art loosens him from himself and his formation rather than asserting an individually formed personality and the general character of a culture—both his own. "My work is an effort to overcome identity," he says.[6] His art has no stable character, and the split he experiences is that of a dream. It has little to do with the controlled distinction between an "I" and its cultural alter ego: the "he" or "she" produced as a speculative object by self-analysis, the aesthetic mastery of self-expression, and the identity politics of competing social ideologies.

At the moment of Lacan's seminar, Tuttle was likely to be dreaming, even if awake. In 1964 he made the first series of works that he accepts as his mature production, his three-inch paper cubes (*Untitled*). Perhaps he understood immediately that such work had significance because something showed. Yet he was then, as he is now, a person who "does not see where it is leading." His conscious failure to see in the usual projective way (as when people direct their path to where they imagine they will have gotten) allows his art to span the divide between passive and active states, dreaming and waking. He risks incoherence by withdrawing the usual respect for mutually exclusive binaries—unconscious or conscious, inside or outside, self or other. Division of this sort structures reflective thought, eliminating insecurity by making the nature of human choices clear. While facilitating decisiveness, the same binaries restrict the flow of ideas and even emotions. Yet, in a well-disciplined society with standardized cultural forms, such limitations tend not to be perceived; few have cause to resist them.

plates 1–10, 39

Tuttle associates the exclusivity of binaries with what he calls the "canon," the set of practices and standards that delineates the realm of creative possibility. By defining right and wrong within a discipline, a canon can rule on everything a person might imagine doing. Doing the impermissible—representing obscenity, for example—may be "wrong" (in the sense of being recklessly offensive and a source of cultural violence), but it remains within the purview of the canon. Transgressing proper behavior is merely rebellious gainsaying, thoroughly understood in terms of established cultural patterns. An artist must be subtly inventive to realize a new freedom outside the recognized transgressions. Asked what his art addresses, Tuttle replies: "the moment where we feel least understanding."[7]

His older contemporary Donald Judd also dreamed of being released from the tyranny of binaries—proper or subversive, right or wrong, this or that. In sculptural practice, "a form that's neither geometric nor organic would be a great discovery," Judd mused.[8] He never claimed to have eliminated the geometric-organic divide, but his objects—boxlike, yet strangely unfamiliar—affected other canonical distinctions. Their way of projecting from the wall or the floor removed their space from the categorical boundaries of both painting and sculpture.[9] Constructing a floor box in 1963 (*Untitled*), Judd, thinking as Tuttle might, "did a great deal of juggling to make [its features]

plate 288

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

uncomposed."[10] Judd's advice to others in 1964: "Use a simple form that doesn't look like either order or disorder"; in other words, ignore the way things are supposed to look (whether geometrically regular or organically irregular) and let them show as they are.[11] However pragmatic his reasoning, Judd made art in the dreamlike realm of neither-nor.

Independently, this has also been Tuttle's realm, from the very start of his career: "To make something which looks like itself is...the problem, the solution."[12] He has released himself from canonical binaries through a long-sustained practice of "drawing." By capitalizing on the capacity of paper to be folded, his cubes of 1964 converted the conventional drawing support to a set of sculptural, even architectural forms with a capacity to display the volume of an inside along with the planarity of an outside ("It was as if I had to get into the space of the interior box and explore"[13]). Over the years, Tuttle has used a remarkable range of devices to extend into space and light such insubstantial materials as masking tape, bits of cloth, and sawdust. Given the particular nature of the material, he might crumple it, bend it, congeal it with glue, or stiffen it by various means—whether by adding an armature of wire, laminating it to a certain thickness, or combining it with another insubstantial but pliable material (often paint or paste). Several of these techniques are evident in small-scale, relieflike works such as *L 1* (1981), *#28* (1981), *The Spirals 7* (1986), *Village III, No. II, 8* (2004), and *Village III, No. II, 9* (2004). Analogous techniques appear in large, expansive wall and floor pieces that combine unusually disparate materials; *Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room II, #5* (1983) and *There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find VI* (1988) are examples.

plate 198
plate 289
plate 290
plate 287

Tuttle has also put shadow into play as a "material." In *New Mexico, New York, #10* (1998) and *"Two with Any To, #1"* (1999) it becomes a constructive element despite its inherently immaterial nature. And there are various ways to experience it: "The shadow that's produced in artificial light can be useful in creativity in one way, whereas the shadow in natural light can be different."[14] Many works demonstrate that a vague shadow projected by very low relief, or from a sheet of paper lifting ever so slightly from a wall, can transform "sculpture" into "painting" (by removing hard and fast physical boundaries) and "painting" into "sculpture" (by articulating dimensional levels). The presence of shadow cannot be theorized as a definitive marker of either medium; it supplements and complicates both. The mere overlap of one sheet with another, so that shadow is present but hardly so—as in *Rose Weight* (1989)—substantially alters the conditions of perception without indicating how the new sensory element should be integrated with the others.

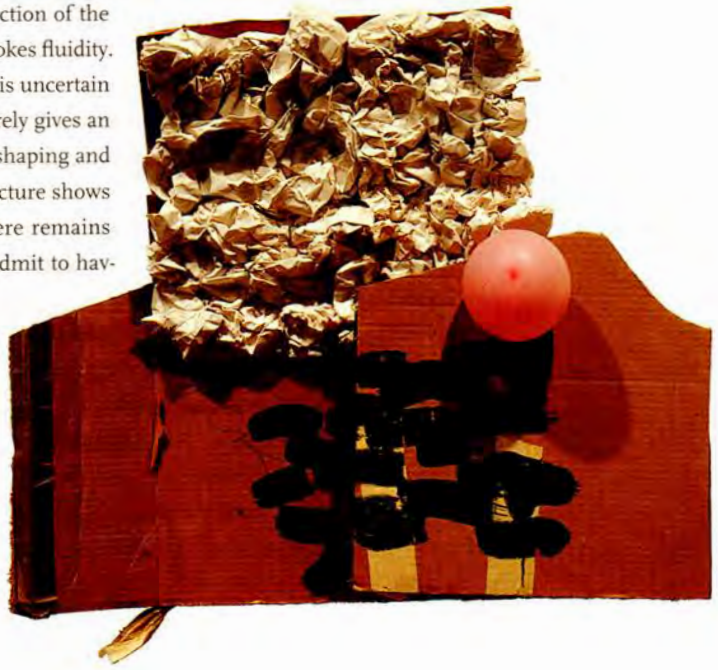
plate 326
plate 341

plate 309

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

Tuttle's procedures bring a structural presence to fragile materials and inherently unstable phenomena that otherwise verge on invisibility. In turn, elements of his large, nominally sculptural constructions evoke the fluid transience of the finest of graphite lines. He calls *Turquoise I* (1988), which extends to nearly six feet, a "floor drawing." It approaches the geometry of architecture while manifesting a sense of the rise, fall, and gravitational flow of the natural environment. The "base" of *Turquoise I* consists of a piece of painted canvas having no apparent structural function. Tuttle cut it so that its shape suggests fluidity, as if the canvas were a liquid spreading over the floor—like paint itself. Yet he brushed the paint in a manner that makes the difference between paint and canvas evident. Above this base, he suspended a second spread of canvas from two sets of wooden struts, shaping four separate strips of the pliable material into one by adding an armature of thin wire. The second canvas becomes more of a physical construction than a flat, projected image. Yet, as it stretches between its two wooden supports and sags in reaction to gravity, this fabric, too, assumes an "image" of fluidity. Analogously, from one of the two wooden supports, Tuttle hung wires with bits of canvas attached by strapping tape. Here the image, if it can be called one, is of branches and leaves; but the physical effect is of the fall or flow of repeating (fluttering?) leaflike shapes. From the opposite wooden support, a set of wooden bars suspended by wire likewise seems to fall. These wooden elements form a sequence, and therefore a linear, flowing movement. Each element is rigid and nearly perpendicular to the direction of the sequence, yet the image (again, if it is one) evokes fluidity. From the appearance of *Turquoise I*, a viewer is uncertain whether its construction is precarious or merely gives an impression of transient flow because of the shaping and positioning of its constitutive parts. The structure shows itself from every viewing angle, and yet there remains everything to learn about it. Would Tuttle admit to having created each possible image within this work and every structural analogy? Probably not—or no more than he would admit to having intended every conceivable ambiguity. In *Turquoise I*, something is happening, still, even now.

plate 265



290 Richard Tuttle **Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room II, #5** 1983

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

NOT-SEE

In 1964, while Lacan lectured on dreams and Judd (as well as others soon to be associated with Minimalism) was inventing volumetric objects designed to evade the strictures of a traditional sculptural aesthetic, Tuttle was in New York becoming an artist.[15] For the record, he had been taking courses at Cooper Union. His two activities—studying art, becoming an artist—may never have been coordinated. In a sense, Tuttle was an "artist" long before acquiring any professional training. He states that he "was born knowing the rules"—the pictorial rules.[16] At a very early stage, he somehow developed the sensitivity and skill to organize a composition in two or three dimensions so that those more experienced in art would appreciate it. He seems to have intuited quickly what others learned only gradually. Their study led them to the organized places where art had already been. In his case, with the rules assimilated at the start, art, having to lead somewhere, was leading elsewhere.

Asked to make an aesthetic declaration in 1968, he began: "In life you can do two things. In art you can do one thing."[17] In life, we make decisions, choosing one or the other binary alternative, often merely a yes or a no or an active or a passive, because we take a reasoned guess at the consequences likely to follow each of the options we perceive. Making voluntary choices, we give our life a direction. In art, it may be necessary to guess only as one moves along, rather than estimating beforehand. A time to guess is hardly there. Tuttle learned that knowing the rules is of little avail, for at any given moment there is but one way to go, whether with or against the rules. It shows—and only at the very moment.

Tuttle rejects no form or structure out of hand, because this would imply a theoretical knowledge of what art must be (through knowing by the logic of binaries what it cannot be). Nor would he wish to convert, subvert, or transform existing models, traditions, canons, or conventions. This would imply an understanding of which kind of art is right and which is wrong, as well as a sense of where art in its current practice should be heading. Tuttle avoids such judgments and lets his art do what it must do, often referring to it, Lacan-like, in a passive, depersonalized voice. His drawings "have come," he says.[18] He speaks of the "intelligibility" of the structure of a recent installation as something that "will become apparent as time goes on"—to him as much as to others. With regard to stating what the structure is, "it might be better to wait until it comes out by itself."[19] And if it comes out one way now, it may come out some other way later, with time and an altered perspective.

Accepting this insecurity, Tuttle nevertheless works with the greatest deliberation, assessing his results in order to build on them, seeking the meaning of what he has already accomplished, as if it were an allegory of a truth not yet revealed to him. Without rejecting canonical works of the past or the aesthetic standards they promote, he recognizes that they establish one of the most absolute of binaries: the visible and the invisible. Whatever art has already shown is the

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

visible. Everything else is invisible. This is not a question of the physical and the metaphysical or the material and the spiritual, for each culture makes certain intangibles visible, its metaphysical and spiritual truths, represented in that culture's art and literature. Whether material or spiritual—a distinction of little consequence to Tuttle—we attend to what we can see, that is, what we already know and believe. We ignore not only what we do not see but also, more perniciously, the human fact *that we do not see*. Alert to our conscious needs, we see only what we are looking for, that is, whatever affirms and pleases us: the shared cultural values and the personal predilections, which may themselves be a disguised product of the cultural values.

Tuttle recognizes that "drawing" can lead experience elsewhere. What kind of drawing would this be? "Successful drawings always fall on the side of what can be seen," whereas his drawings "fall on the side of what cannot be seen." He elaborates: "We don't really know what drawing is, for, as the failed side is lacking, drawing hasn't yet reached the whole of what it is." According to this distinction, his art—drawing that moves to its failure points—must be unsuccessful, even incoherent, by any canonical standards. Outside the logic of binaries, it admits the negative without rejecting the positive. A canon allows only two possibilities, mutually exclusive: success or lack of success, coherence or incoherence, positive or negative. In fact, "success" escapes Tuttle because his art has no standard end to reach. In this case, however, lack of success does not entail incoherence. Like Lacan's attentive dreamer, Tuttle simply "does not see where it is leading." Dreams do not appear incoherent; in fact, they *feel* quite coherent, but their logic escapes the dreamer. To see, Tuttle must not-see. His is a nonprojective vision: more of a feel that something is happening than a foreknowledge of the category of occurrence—its "identity."

"Suddenly," he says, "you get into a whole new world, which is like when you fall in love with someone and even love what you don't like." Unreserved, love is beyond prediction and projection. "If you really love drawings, you must even love the parts you don't like"—the parts that fail because they fail to affirm your taste, the parts that (in a canonical world) should be out of the picture, unseen. You must nevertheless love those parts, Tuttle says, "for you see them as drawings."[20] Through his act of drawing he often conceives of what it means to be a human being (whether human as a source of agency or human as an object of love): "An element within the drawing can [be the] causative factor for drawing another part of the drawing.... The drawing then becomes a drawing of drawing.... It feels [as if] the human being has an unlimited capacity."[21] Is there a gap in Tuttle's reasoning? Not really. Human beings make drawings. He argues that a drawing and a human being share similarly in autonomy; both are free to change. His commitment to follow the lead of drawing turns aesthetic "failure" into success, or at least into something that he must accept, however alien to him—because, for no reason other than that a drawing has gone somewhere, he can love it. "I get a lot of encouragement when I can't understand the reason why something exists. But it does exist."[22]

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

In September 1965, only twenty-four years old, Tuttle had a one-person exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery. He installed forms he had rendered in thin, hollow sandwiches of sheets of painted wood. The forms were flat; yet they projected slightly into space, one to two inches above the support surface. Viewers could see them either as shaped paintings or as sculpture in low relief. He shaped the wood in accord with preparatory cartoons of cut paper, his pliant drawing material. The slightly irregular, wavering edges of both the paper and its imitation in wood evoke the quality of hand-drawn lines, exploratory vectors that respond to conditions while moving along. The more pliant and adaptable the materials, the more readily such responsiveness registers. In wood, because it is relatively rigid, straight cuts are easier to achieve than the irregular cuts of Tuttle's objects (e.g., *Drift III* [1965]). Yet his irregularities avoid looking mannered and do not even seem fully intended; they express neither a style nor an attitude. Such irregular irregularity offered Tuttle the advantage of escaping straightness, a quality with the potential to be perfected. Perfection of this type—like the accentuated irregularity that signals an emotive, expressive individual—is a foreseeable goal. Tuttle's irregularity is otherwise, belonging to his forms and materials rather than his hand. (His frequent use of ordinary plywood, which can splinter when cut—*Two Blocks* [1970s]—and which catches unequal amounts of paint in its rippled grain—*Replace the Abstract Picture Plane IV* [1999], *Overlap A23* [2000]—may reflect his delight in such deadpan, canon-free irregularity.)

plate 53

plate 291

plate 340

plate 63

For his 1965 installation, Tuttle placed some of his constructed paintings against the wall, others against the floor. He was more interested in the fact that wall and floor are distinct than in how this difference might generate a theory. Such a difference shows in context—that is to say, in action—as an object takes a position in relation to an impermanent environment of space, light, other objects, and the posturing of viewers. Especially with respect to viewing position, Tuttle became involved with the specific height at which certain (but not all) of his objects should be displayed against the wall (more on this to come). "Our response to any image," he stated recently, "is a response to the space it inhabits."[23] Some years after the inaugural Parsons exhibition, he gathered all the drawings that happened to be in his New York studio and moved them to Annemarie Verna Galerie in Zurich—"to promote their autonomous existence as a group in another place."[24] There the drawings redrew themselves.

291 Richard Tuttle **Two Blocks** 1970s
Plywood, nails, and string,
2 3/8 x 5 7/8 x 1/4 in.
Collection of Brooke Alexander, New York

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

Tuttle's wooden shapes of the 1960s were familiar in their simplicity, yet unfamiliar in the irregular specifics of their contours. A gray form approximated a thin arch or an inverted *U*, but it bore the title *Hill* (1965). For some viewers, this might cause the form to become more of a picturesque landscape than either an element of architecture or a cipher of graphic design. If so, would it be an iconic, look-alike representation of a hill or an abstract symbol of the character of hillness—its silhouetted arc, its geological arching? Perhaps this form was no more than itself, a piece of painted wood with its distinctive shape, which might or might not refer to something else in the complex world of mental images and material structures. In certain contexts, the woodness of *Hill* might become more prominent than its hillness. Like an object worthy of love, the shape with its colored surface and projective depth exists in either case: it shows. Seen flat against the wall, such a "hill" of cut wood could morph into minimalist painting. Or it might become low, uninflected, sculptural relief.[25] The question of categorization has been particularly vexed in Tuttle's case, which is a factor of his achievement. Lack of conceptual stability has allowed his forms to be viewed freshly through several decades, even by their creator.

plate 292

At the Parsons show, Tuttle presented two elongated bars painted with blue acrylic, set parallel to each other and at a diagonal in relation to both the horizontality of the floor and the verticality of the wall. He titled this work *Equals* (1965). Are the bars equal to each other—that is, are they (two) equals? Does the irregularity of each—in cutting, in paint application, even in the angle of presentation—limit them to being equals in name only? The two bars taken together can be viewed as a single sign, the "equals" sign. Tuttle's title operates accordingly in two ways: it names the sign represented by the two wooden bars and alludes to an active judgment of equality between them, defining the condition of their equivalence (and if, to the contrary, the bars were judged unequal to each other, they would fail to constitute an equals sign—so their title, while raising the question, begs it). The word *equals* itself fluctuates between noun and verb, naming and doing, authoritative identification and assertive performance. Two things are equal only if, by some arbitrary operation, we determine the respect in which they demonstrate equivalence.

plate 47

Tuttle's early objects equivocate over equivalence, moving between the familiar and the unfamiliar, sometimes shifting position from wall to floor, and sometimes changing appearance due to handling and wear or the interventions of collectors who display them.[26] His two wooden

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

bars, with or without a title, are like words; they become through our cumulative use and experience of them more connotative than denotative. And like words, they seem public, available to be appropriated by an author-creator but immune to being permanently marked by the personality of any single author's hand. Unlike words, Tuttle's signs maintain a specific materiality, yet one that can approach invisibility. Many of his works are particularly small objects, with still smaller internal elements calling for visual attention (yet invisible to those too concept-bound to look). His series of white octagonal forms cut from relatively large, thin sheets of paper around fifty-four inches in diameter—*1st Paper Octagonal* (1970) is an example—approaches invisibility by other means. He pastes these forms flush to a white wall, pushing his materiality to the not-see limit of experience where an impersonal it-shows occurs. Tuttle expected that he could dramatically reduce the perceptible difference between his geometric shape and its supporting wall, but the *Paper Octagonals* proved him wrong: the space between remained "infinite."[27] When the space shows, you see—or not-see. You see what it shows. (Once you have not-seen, not-seeing and seeing can be the same.)

plate 90

With forty years of public productivity now behind him, Tuttle is not an "artist" (this can be no more than an honorific title).[28] "Born knowing the rules," he is still *becoming* an artist. The rules do not enable him to see—foresee—how to make art. He makes no claim to universal success. He can only make art when he does, that is, when the art shows. In 1990, he admitted that his drawings and objects were unlikely to answer the questions they and his own life were posing. If answers were to appear, they would not be in a form that would register as an intellectual foundation for further action. Yet his practice of art was providing the greatest opportunity: "I think that I get a chance to be aware."[29]

So Tuttle remains a somewhat passive spectator in the midst of a very active artistic process that takes turns (reorientations) for which his previous experience gives him scant advance indication.[30] In this respect art is a paradigm for life. Its possible turns are a life's possible turns, made available to consciousness.[31] Tuttle has acknowledged the inevitability of changes that an individual cannot direct, changes so pronounced that they disrupt the inertial continuity of experience, which otherwise maintains each person's comforting sense of self, his or her self-connection: "In the middle, something happens."[32] "Middle" does not refer to any specific time. We live always in the middle of processes and events (going "through life like a cork floating on the sea" is how Tuttle sometimes imagines it[33]). An artist—a person ever becoming an artist—is one who sees the dream state under waking conditions. In the midst of a situation already formed and defined, an artist recognizes that something else is happening, something larger perhaps. It shows.

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

AFFECTATION VANISHING

Richard has the courage to change his thinking, and I don't want to use the word experiment, *but I would use* change. HERBERT VOGEL, CA. 1990–91[34]

If I can free a humble material from itself, perhaps I can free myself from myself....
I think [my work] knows, is smarter than I am, better than I am. RICHARD TUTTLE, 2004[35]

Identity is stable and fixed. To the contrary, every happening constitutes a change in the given condition. To those who are attentive, materiality reveals unexpected qualities, properties, and relationships: "We would focus in on very slight details," recalls collector Dorothy Vogel, commenting on days spent looking with Tuttle.[36] Materiality offered him the means to explore a certain purpose: "to overcome identity."[37] This entailed abandoning every fantasy of continuity, connectedness, and control. If the self is my identity, to "free myself from myself" would be to change or counteract the culturally imposed force that makes things alike—the identity that induces me to act like myself.

"There seems to be a premium on the ability to contradict oneself totally while maintaining complete integrity, don't you agree," Tuttle remarked, at once seriously and facetiously, as if acting out his own thought. He was responding to my having probed the curious notion that individuals have "no connection" other than imagined ones.[38] A person's identity, which ought to be entirely specific, acts as a limiting generalization—the selection of a number of canonical characteristics taken to represent the whole. Once established, an identity does not change; this is the fantasy (not the dream) of connectedness. Like race, class, or gender identity, personal identity typecasts its possessor. It does so in such a subtle way that most people do not resist or contradict it; they let "I" be objectified as "me" and even a third-person "he" or "she." We willingly identify ourselves as a certain type and then predict our own reactions to events, as if this inversion of subject and object were granting us a kind of introspective knowledge. To the contrary, Tuttle believes of his work that it "is smarter than I am"—an uncommon attitude. He is not the smart one; the work is. He recognizes his dreamlike need to follow his art, ignorant of where it may be going, because virtually everything remains to be discovered. The more a work incorporates material change—freeing itself from its proper identity—the more exemplary and instructive it becomes. Tuttle "asks it to tell [him] what it knows and then [he] humbly listens—the payoff is greater than the humiliation."[39] Having been created, a work of art only just begins.

In 1996, preparing for an exhibition, Tuttle reviewed a set of small sculptures from the 1970s, works such as *White Rocker* and *Rest*: "Much to my surprise, pieces I didn't understand became understandable (as part of the attention given by the show, or due to the passage of time, I do not know)."[40] He recorded his experience of each work, sometimes in terms of an expanding set

plate 131 / plate 293

293 Richard Tuttle **Rest** 1970s

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

of questions. Concerning *Rest*, which sets a layer of bluish gray paint between two slightly offset wooden blocks, as if the color might act as a flexible, connective membrane, Tuttle asked, "Is there a way to see 'touching' in this way, i.e., which is inscribed as not seen?"[41] Presumably, the "rest" of the bluish gray continues beyond its visibly painted edges, lying between and therefore touching the two blocks, which touch (or "rest" against) each other, so that *Rest* constitutes a visual demonstration of the nonvisual nature of the tactile.

Herbert Vogel's reference to "change" as opposed to "experiment" was in part a response to Tuttle's sensory and intellectual openness to his past work, which for the artist, as for the viewer, is never more than nominally completed. Whereas experiment is voluntary and controlled, change is often involuntary and abrupt.[42] As if by chance, change happens. The fragility of Tuttle's work becomes the material representation of his acceptance of change: "People like something that lasts; I like something that vanishes."[43] Why? Perhaps vanishing is consistent with a loss or blurring of identity. Allowing one's hand-wrought creations to disappear is a step toward releasing an identity from its pretensions to permanence. Vogel comments: "He does not use rag paper but the cheapest paper.... He wanted that effect. Some of his constructions are so fragile that they will come apart in time."[44]

Tuttle's objects have an experiential transience independent of the passage of time. Because their irregularity is neither stylistic nor expressive, we cannot generalize, and therefore cannot remember their precise form. A memory would require a new viewing. The individual sides of each of Tuttle's cloth octagonals, such as *Purple Octagonal* (1967), appear unequal in length but not absolutely so. Certain ones *might* be equal to certain others, that is, they appear neither obviously equal nor obviously unequal. The effect is of irregular irregularity—unmemorable in both its parts and its whole, but memorable as a unique visual experience that, with every reiteration, would require equally undiminished attention. A person does not become "familiar" with such an extreme degree of specificity. Scanning from one segment to another, either across the diameter or around the circumference, a viewer is at a loss for concepts leading to an efficient verbal description of the visual form. It hardly looks octagonal, even. Verification of the eight-sidedness demands counting.

plate 21

The experiential transience of Tuttle's objects shows in many ways: for his recent *Village II, Sculpture* (2003) he applied glitter to a twisting column of Styrofoam, a form that induces a viewer to follow the twist around. In accord with the movement of viewing, the glitter catches ambient light in ever-changing ways, encouraging still more movement. The sculpture can be remembered only in terms of its motion—the viewer's, that is—for it has no experiential form that remains static. It has no "identity." "I am of a mind to

plate 294

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

do everything for a short time," Tuttle states, believing that "all collectable from the past, all future precautions, everything, should be poured into the present, which is temporary."[45] The situation changes. Something is happening.

Tuttle's 1972 series of forty-eight *Wire Pieces* may be the easiest of his vanishing acts to grasp in principle (though we should hesitate to hold Tuttle to principles of any kind: principles establish canons, which frame identities). *21st Wire Piece*, like others of the type, consists of three elements: a line drawn by Tuttle on the surface of a wall; a wire strung along the length of this line, fastened to the wall by a nail at either end (the terminal points of the line); and the shadow or shadows cast by the wire upon the wall. Although a pencil line is for all practical purposes unlimited in flexibility and a wire is itself entirely linear, Tuttle's wire cannot follow the lead of his pencil because, as a result of having been coiled, it retains a certain stiffness and springiness; this, coupled with its weight (however slight), causes it to project out from the wall, rather unpredictably. The shadow then follows the wire, not the pencil, but its own linear configuration is equally determined by the position of the source of light.

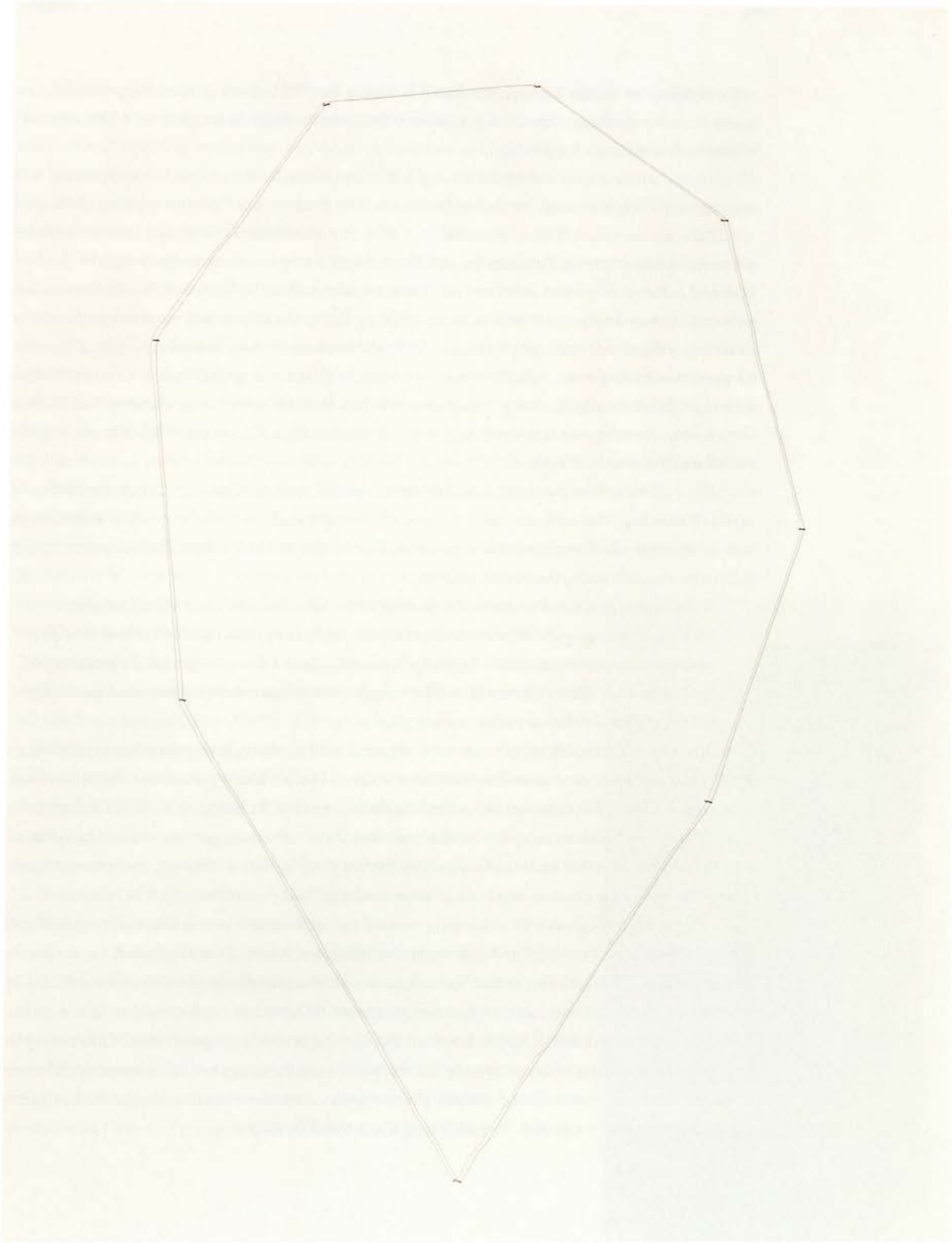
In *21st Wire Piece*, the three elements—pencil, wire, shadow—constitute very different states of drawing. The wire manifests the two nearly right-angle bends of the pencil as well as its very acute angle, but has curled upwards into a curve, which its shadow extends to a greater length. Tuttle comments, raising the essential issues:

> *At the beginning of the Wire Pieces, the question for me was "how can I keep myself out of my work?"... Drawing for the Wire Pieces is intended to empty every capacity I have. I have a configuration in mind and try to draw it "perfectly," by hand.... I can know exactly what the pencil will be, but I never know what the wire will do, that's conditioned by many things. And then, I have really no idea of what the shadow will do, none at all.*[46]

With his wall drawing effort, often quite a physical performance, he renders his capabilities—intellectual and emotional as well as manual—"empty." He (his identity) vanishes. Because of this, whatever sensibility he possesses as a mere living being remains free, clear, without direction; in his drained state, he becomes receptive to whatever may show. "The passage from individuality based on control and direction to an individuality which is time"—that is, change, movement, immediacy—"is one of the greatest sagas of our times, and the *Wire Pieces* chronicle this."[47]

An analogous way of keeping oneself out of the work is to remove all personal and cultural affectation. The "self," as Tuttle seems to conceive of it, is itself an affectation. So are beauty and art, that is, art in the forms that the culture tends to acknowledge. To defeat the self and its affectations, Tuttle ignores many of the niceties one would expect to come second nature to an aesthetically sensitive individual. Recall, however, that he "was born knowing the rules."[48] There may be little point to practicing what one already knows, which would amount to a life of instinct and habit. If the aesthetic end of art comes naturally, then create an art without succumbing to the instinct to aestheticize. Here is more of Tuttle's thinking about the *Wire Pieces*:

Shiff, Richard, “It Shows,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276



Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

> *It is easy to get obsessive about executing [them]. The truth is I even do not know whether the wire goes clockwise or counterclockwise around the nails—something which I would think enormously important to know, but the fact that I do not saves them from ever becoming too precious and tells me something about what "art" thinks important.*[49]

Having emptied himself by drawing, Tuttle became free to let the wire and nails perform outside his human-culture intervention ("I did not make this," he might have said).[50] Shortly before the *Wire Pieces*, he completed his series of octagonals with some variants in thin wire (*Wire Octagonal [#4]* [1971]). These followed the cloth and then the paper octagonals. Recalling his attitude, he stated: "It was almost Zen. I thought about how to not make art."[51] plate 295

Making art and not making art can look quite alike (just as seeing can resemble not-seeing). Attitude is important. Tuttle's art leads me into his dreamlike not-see logic, which I can only follow, discovering where I go. When I viewed his *3rd Rope Piece* (1974) in a photographic reproduction published in several catalogues, I was struck by the art it seemed to exhibit. (Would Tuttle encase the word in quotation marks: "art"?) *3rd Rope Piece* consists of a three-inch length of white clothesline cord, three-eighths inch in diameter, centered along the width of a white wall, to which three small nails set nearly symmetrically, one at each end, one in the center, attach it. I noticed that the third nail was not only dead center but had been driven so as to avoid interfering with the braiding of the several plaits of cord. That detail, ever so clear in the photograph, impressed me; it even seemed that the central part of the cord swelled a bit, accommodating the nail. In addition, the end nails—having been hammered deeper than the center nail and becoming somewhat obscured by the surrounding fibers—appeared to work in harmony with the cord. By their action, they rounded the cord off at its slightly splayed, cut ends. These details reflected a hand entirely sensitive to the materials and relationships involved: the nails had been driven just far enough; the delicate, braided structure of the cord had been respected; a logical symmetry had been established. No artist need have accomplished this, just someone with ordinary aesthetic awareness. The aesthetic quality showed. plate 296

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

When I reported my observations to Tuttle, they failed to confirm his emotional sense of having made the piece, nor did they conform to how he thought it ought to appear. Because he believes that certain of his works should be free to be installed by others—an instance of self-identity vanishing—he wondered if the source of the photograph was an installation in which he had not participated. But it was also possible that he had been remiss in this case. Instead of "I did not make this," his thought was "*Could* I have made this?"

> *It is hard not to be aesthetic and place the nail in between the plaiting, but one should not. Yes, anyone can put this piece on a wall. Usually I say, anyone can do it, but I can do it better than anyone. This is because I care more, but that is not definitive.*

Tuttle is the artist he is because he would indeed care more. Still, this "is not definitive," for the consequences of true care are unpredictable. Tuttle informed me that the degree of splaying and fraying at the ends would have resulted from his tapping the cord, not driving the nails. Nevertheless,

> *It is the nail that counts, not the cord. If one is thinking of the nail first and the rope second, it is easy to avoid the aesthetic trap of the space in the plaits. The art experience is much easier when there is no aesthetics around to get in the way, lessen, and pollute. The nail [can be] unaesthetic...a counter to and potential victim of the aesthetic of the plaited cord.... It is hard to get free of all the beauty in this world, and most of us fall its victim.... Beauty...is unavoidable, though art is not.*[52]

Beauty, when intentionally enhanced, is an affectation. Because beauty is already with us, art must show what beauty—its aestheticization—masks. If the braided cord is already beautiful, don't aestheticize the nail.

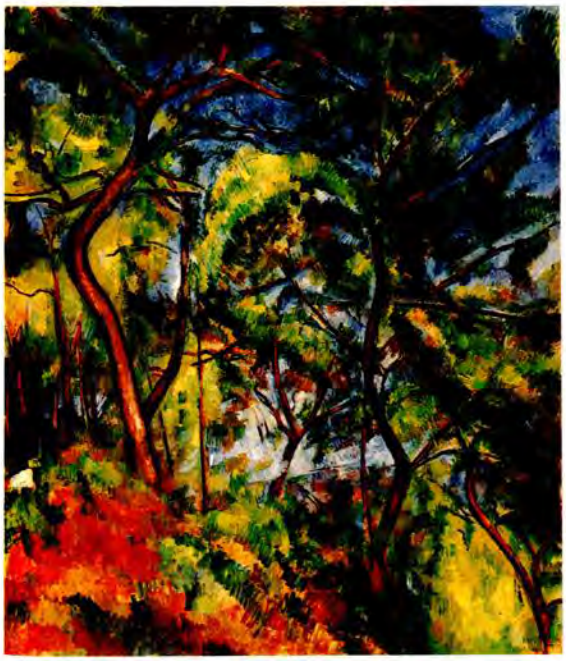
I realize that the effect I initially perceived in *3rd Rope Piece*, which seemed to project from its photograph, was "art" (not art). It was *"art"* that showed, if only to me. I saw the result I would have expected of myself, rather than not-seeing, dreamlike, Tuttle-like. The sensitivity I attributed to the construction of *3rd Rope Piece* may have been paradigmatically human, but it was also canonical, a manifestation of proper behavior. The photograph represented the wash cord as drawing, yet drawing withdrawn from its "unlimited capacity"—drawing having lost its link to the analogous capacity of the human.[53] Perhaps the view given by the photograph reflected a certain vanity, affectation, or pretense to perfection, the kind of perfection that ends in recognized beauty. Care does not lead to perfection of this sort, which would belong to a conceptual order (indeed, an aesthetics) rather than constitute a mode of living. A caring act of invention accomplishes its work without doing a noticeably good job any more than it does a noticeably bad job; it avoids making a fetish of its caring. In all art, wrote Agnes Martin, Tuttle's friend of many years, "technique is a hazard even as it is in living life."[54] Care becomes invisible for the sake of letting something other than technique and its beauties show.

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

Tuttle has had a new photograph taken of a different installation of *3rd Rope Piece*, with a different three-inch segment of the original cord. In this instance, the center nail appears to violate the plaiting—but just barely, so that it neither passes definitively through the plait nor definitively avoids it. Tuttle also placed the two end nails less symmetrically, the left nail lying noticeably closer to the cut end of the cord than the right. In fact, each of the features that seemed to me to have aestheticized *3rd Rope Piece* are either lacking or have been mitigated in this new installation. The nails show because they are no longer there to arrange the cord; and so the cord shows also in all its specificity. plate 297

"My work is an effort to overcome identity," Tuttle says.[35] Remove the aesthetics from a work and its identity vanishes into specificity, with no feature or quality assuming dominance. Generalized description and analysis no longer comprehend it. My initial account of *3rd Rope Piece* abstracted from the work certain aesthetic features, distilling them in a manner consistent with general standards for objects that cultivate a personality and identity—objects with which humans customarily identify. Nothing about the word *identity* restricts it to being associated with this type of generality; in fact, it may seem far more natural (and therefore, ideologically sanctioned) to link what we call identity to individuality and specificity. Am I not free to cultivate *my* identity rather than someone else's? This straightforwardness does not accord with Tuttle's understanding of the motivation for abstract and nonobjective art as these modes developed during the modern period, so often as vehicles for self-expression. For him, identity appears as aesthetic standardization, not anaesthetic (beauty-denying) specificity. Identity is cultural identity.

Inherited from the culture, Tuttle's problem (ironically) is old. It was acknowledged by artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who advocated expressionistic, individualistic forms and unconventional techniques, self-consciously resisting the existing institutional norms. They recognized that the intellectual abstractions associated with artistic "content" or subject matter were cultural constructions linked to massive ideological generalizations. To counter the given institutional culture they shifted from its approved thematics to focus on immediate, sensory aspects of nature, a realm of experience they felt able to appropriate as their own. Ultimately, artists in this emerging alternative tradition would concentrate on the studio materials used to render naturalistic effects. Turning inward in a *physical* rather than intellectual sense—to handle paper, canvas, wood, metal, graphite, or paint—they evaded the most obvious ideological clichés of their era, finding individual expression by engaging with ordinary matter, yielding themselves to it. In this manner, certain early modernist artists abandoned the more cultivated, spiritualized side of the "self," which they came to regard as a social identity formed by cultural



Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

SENSORY PARADOX

One remarkable phenomenon of my work is its love for being hung at a height of fifty-four inches from the floor.... [This height] brings me in contact with anything that's ever existed in human life.

RICHARD TUTTLE, 2004, 2001[61]

Tuttle centers his *3rd Rope Piece* with respect to the width of the wall that supports it, but he fixes it at three feet above the floor, no matter where the installation occurs. At this height, in terms of the conventions of accessibility and display, the work is nowhere: too low to relate to a person "eye-to-eye" and too low even to be approached by the hand in an act of manipulation. Tuttle may prefer this height because it removes the work from all anthropomorphic fantasies. It can no longer be a person with whom I engage, nor can it be an object at my disposal. Not knowing what it is, I am open to not-see.

The fifty-four-inch height that Tuttle now uses for most of his wall pieces (measured from the center point of the individual work) is a very different matter. For hanging a drawing, this height is somewhat lower than, but still related to, the general standard. Rather than eye-to-eye height, it is hand-to-eye. A drawing at fifty-four inches does not quite look back but instead reaches out, making itself available to touch, inducing a viewer to reach out to it in turn. A point of comparison: light switches are usually located about fifty-four inches above the floor for ease of operation; with a very natural right-angle bend at the elbow, one's hand is in position to manipulate a switch or anything else placed at that level. We see the switch and then touch it; but, when in a darkened room, we easily locate it by touch alone. Tuttle had no pragmatic standard in mind, but rather intuited the fifty-four-inch measure through his experience and observation. As a viewer looks, this height brings the works close, not only in appearance but, more insistently, by an invitation to touch. Tuttle states that his work has a "love" of being hung at this height. It may have been an offhand comment, but with this love, everything that shows becomes drawing for both eye and hand, even "the parts you don't like."[62]

With respect to its viewing height, the intimacy of Tuttle's art has little to do with its size, but rather with the way we use our visual and tactile senses. The eye keeps its distance, whereas the hand acts effectively by contact. Traditionally, drawings are objects designed to be seen. When placed in a position that relates them equally to the hand, a certain conflict develops, or the potential for a new, hybrid kind of relationship, a noncanonical use of the senses (Tuttle's reflections about *Rest* might be relevant here). The simultaneous engagement of hand and eye at fifty-four inches—an engagement analogous to what an artist must do to make physical work like Tuttle's (more doing than theorizing)—expands a person's contact with the totality of human existence, just as Tuttle suggests.[63] His way of saying this: It is not a question of measuring bodily movement but "another kind of knowledge, of something being accurate."[64] The range of experience included within his type of sensory paradox accommodates the noncanonical cases of such accuracy—all the sensations not normally perceived.

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

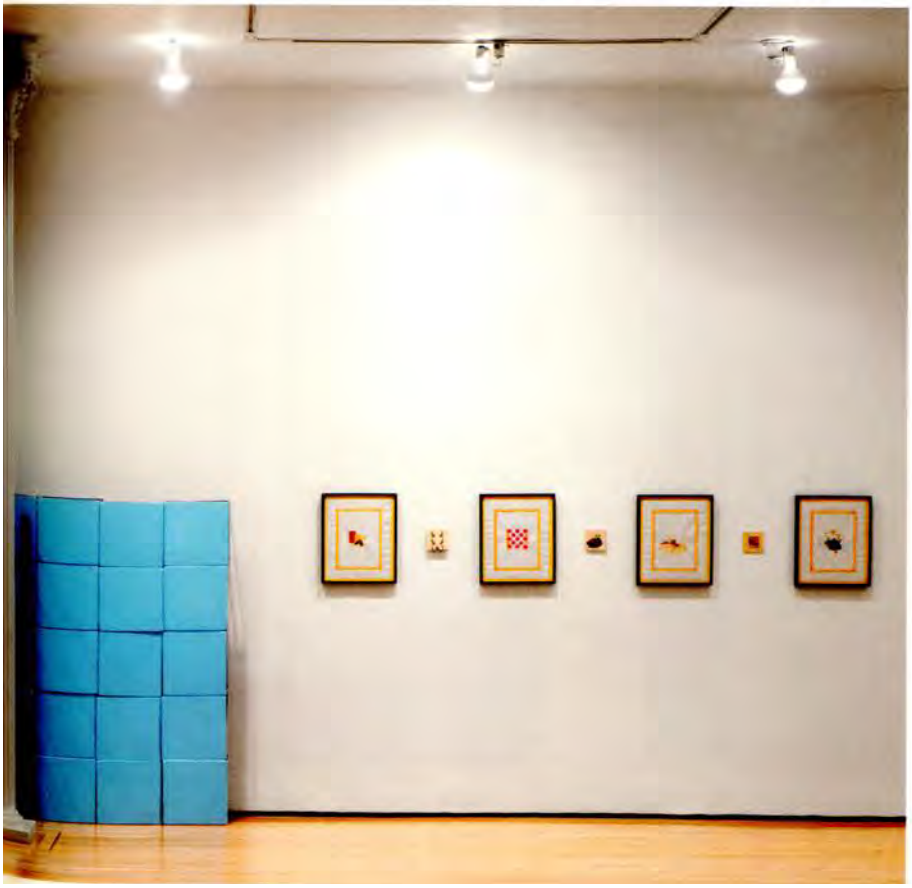
color and irregular structure, but it is stable to the hand because of its weight and rigidity. This disjunction or disconnection within the experience of a single object is a thematic feature of *Village III*, a group of objects on a not-see mission:

> *The canon says that of all the colors one can't draw, the most undrawable is light blue. Color has no structure; therefore, there is nothing to draw. To expand the canon, we must remind it that a drawing must be on a page, a paper, a something, and that this is structure. Structure can [also] be known in the mind. When we realize the utter specificity with which a certain light blue can be known in the mind, we are outside the canon, and we know light blue can be drawn as structure when drawing has become everything drawing was meant to be.*[65]

The materially heavy "wall" of light blue may well appear less substantial than the open grid of rebar placed in front of it—a sensory paradox that causes a viewer to expand the possibilities of light blue, of structure, and of drawing.

Sensory paradox has often been Tuttle's result; he accepts it, though he may not deliberately seek it. *Turquoise I* (already discussed), with its elements of wood, canvas, wire, and tape, fuses solidity with liquidity on a relatively grand scale. *Real and Drawn Twist* (1970s), a very modest five by two inches, may present just as profound a sensory challenge. Tuttle recalls it with fondness—it showed something, and it continues to show. He had been twisting strips of paper so that the back would come to the front, while also making drawings of such a twist on flat paper. As if to forge a material link between the two types of image, he decided to attach the twisted paper to a flat paper support, and on its verso he drew a twist.[66] Rarely has such a complex visual-tactile situation been so simply and directly produced. The drawing (a visual twist) is schematic, yet not at all regular; its "real" version (a tactile twist) introduces irregularities all the more pronounced. Or does it? Perhaps not, because the line drawing is one medium and the twisted paper is another. In Tuttle's expanded conception, paper becomes a medium of drawing—not a support, but the medium itself.

plates 300–301



299 Installation view of the 2004 exhibition **Richard Tuttle: It's a Room for 3 People** at the Drawing Center, New York, showing **Village III, Sculpture** (2004) and related works

Shiff, Richard, “It Shows,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

Back to back, the two renderings eliminate the front/back binary, while each medium generates its specific sense of a twist, possibly the same twist. Looking, we cannot determine whether Tuttle was willful in giving a particular waver to his line or in causing this degree of disorder in tearing and crumpling his twisted paper. Is the material leading the artist, or is the artist leading the material? We would need to test out the drawing and twisting in a version of our own, to see (or rather, not-see) what happens. *Something* happens, an experience other than “art.” It happens in a human consciousness alert to sensory paradox.

Tuttle’s kind of direct attention to materiality and the senses brings to each of us a degree of change: less affectation; reduced identity. He states, “My work is an effort to overcome identity.”[67] Yes, it shows.

Shiff, Richard, "It Shows," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 253-276

NOTES

1 Jacques Lacan (seminar, 19 February 1964), *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), 75–76 (emphasis in original; paragraphing suppressed). "Dans le champ du rêve...ce qui caractérise les images, c'est que *ça montre*.... Notre position dans le rêve est, en fin de compte, d'être foncièrement celui qui ne voit pas. Le sujet ne voit pas où ça mène, il suit.... Il peut se dire—*Ce n'est qu'un rêve*. Mais il ne se saisit pas comme celui qui se dit—*Malgré tout, je suis conscience de ce rêve*" (*Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller [Paris: Seuil, 1973], 72). For essential aid in research, I thank Charlotte Cousins, Adrian Kohn, Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, Joanna Berman, Susan Harris, Brooke Alexander, and Sperone Westwater, New York.

2 Richard Tuttle, interview by Sylvie Couderc (October 1986), in *Richard Tuttle: Wire Pieces*, ed. Jean-Louis Froment (Bordeaux, France: CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 1987), 39; Richard Tuttle, unpublished interview by Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, 25–26 October and 12 November 1990, courtesy Richard Tuttle and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge. Susan Harris kindly supplied a transcript of this interview. The November session returned to some of the topics of the October sessions: "I found in my voice [in October] a kind of pretentiousness of not really speaking from the center of one's being. I was always slightly outside that, making some kind of pompous, ponderous statement, something of even greater, greater distance. I'd like to really get rid of that pretentious, authoritarian tone." Most of the statements that I have drawn from Berssenbrugge's interview belong nevertheless to the October sessions. In my judgment, they do not cause Tuttle to appear pretentious; but this is a matter to which (to his credit) he is extraordinarily sensitive.

3 Tuttle, conversation with the author, 11 December 2004.

4 Tuttle, conversation with Marcia Tucker, summer–fall 1975, quoted in Marcia Tucker, *Richard Tuttle* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1975), 5.

5 Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge.

6 Richard Tuttle, "Appendix IV," in *List of Drawing Material of Richard Tuttle & Appendices*, by Gianfranco Verna (Zurich: Annemarie Verna Galerie, 1979), 356.

7 Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge.

8 Donald Judd, "Statement" (1967), *Complete Writings 1959–1975* (Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), 193.

9 See Richard Shiff, "A Space of One to One," *Donald Judd: 50 x 100 x 50, 100 x 100 x 50* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2002), 5–23.

10 Donald Judd, in John Coplans, "An Interview with Don Judd," *Artforum* 9 (June 1971): 43.

11 Donald Judd, in "Questions to Stella and Judd," interview by Bruce Glaser (1964), ed. Lucy Lippard (some statements revised and augmented, 1965), *ARTnews* 65 (September 1966): 58.

12 Richard Tuttle, "Work Is Justification for the Excuse," statement for *Documenta 5*, Kassel, 1972, quoted in Tucker, *Richard Tuttle*, 5.

13 Richard Tuttle, "Richard Tuttle, 19 February 1998," in *Inside the Studio: Two Decades of Talks with Artists in New York*, ed. Judith Olch Richards (New York: Independent Curators International, 2004), 192.

14 Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge.

15 Any historical narrative or critical principle to be derived by connecting Lacan, Judd, and Tuttle should be considered arbitrary—a matter of certain coincidences of chronology, the historical agents' language, and the interests of the critical writer. Such coincidences, although dreamlike, are the stuff of history. They lead a writer from the individual agents to speculation about general cultural forces—a collective sensibility, a discourse, an ideology—causing history to follow canonical lines. Use with caution.

16 Tuttle, conversation with Herbert Vogel, Dorothy Vogel, and the author, 13 September 2004.

17 Richard Tuttle, statement dated 26 January 1968, *Art International* 12 (15 May 1968), 48.

18 Tuttle, "Appendix IV," 357.

19 Richard Tuttle, in "Drawing Matters: A Conversation between Richard Tuttle and Catherine de Zegher, April 2004," in *Richard Tuttle: Manifesto*, Drawing Papers 49 (New York: Drawing Center, 2004), 1.

20 Ibid., 3.

21 Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge.

22 Ibid.

23 Tuttle, interview by Michael Auping, 17 July 1997, quoted in Michael Auping, "On Relationships," *Agnes Martin / Richard Tuttle* (Fort Worth: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 1998), 84.

24 Gianfranco Verna (representing Tuttle's thinking), "Foreword," trans. Gail J. Vine, *List of Drawing Material*, 7.

25 The Betty Parsons Gallery exhibition brochure by Gordon B. Washburn called the works "constructed paintings"; see Eduardo Lipschutz-Villa, ed., *Richard Tuttle* (Amsterdam: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1991), 86.

26 With regard to Tuttle's unstretched canvas works of 1967, such as *Purple Octagonal* (pl. 21), "We were told it did not matter in which way they were hung and that they could also be spread out on the floor" (Monica Schmela, statement [5 December 1990], in Lipschutz-Villa, *Richard Tuttle*, 88). Additionally, because Tuttle hemmed the octagonals on both sides, front and back could be reversed (Robert Pincus-Witten, "The Art of Richard Tuttle," *Artforum* 8 [February 1970]: 62). The distinctively wrinkled surfaces of these dyed canvases result from the "scrunched-up" conditions of storage between hangings (Auping, "On Relationships," 84).

27 Tuttle, "Drawing Matters," 6.

28 "I think when a person, an individual, calls themsel[f] an artist, I really don't know what they mean because either you're at reality and you wouldn't need to claim yourself as anything or you're not at reality, in which case it's a lie that you're an artist" (Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge).

29 Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge. Susan Harris quoted this passage in "Twenty Floor Drawings," in Lipschutz-Villa, *Richard Tuttle*, 49.

300–301 Richard Tuttle **Real and Drawn Twist** 1970s
(left: recto; right: verso)

30 The words of Gianfranco Verna (December 1990) are suggestive in this respect, as he refers to the situation of an artist who allows himself to see without foreseeing: "Anyone attempting to pursue this path can only do so as a companion, always a step behind, letting the unknown take its course. Not doing, but being done unto, perhaps in order to realize that this is the only way to experience what has not yet happened and need not necessarily happen" (reprinted in Lipschutz-Villa, *Richard Tuttle*, 98).

31 "Drawing is 'inside' the person; not on the paper. The appreciation, development of drawing is one of the great characteristics of a human well-being. The drawing gives the human the full possibility of exploring their possibility" (Tuttle, statement in *40 Tage: Zeichnunger Richard Tuttle* [Bonn: Galerie Erhard Klein, 1989]; quoted in Harris, in Lipschutz-Villa, *Richard Tuttle*, 56, 59).

32 See note 2.

33 Tuttle, statement to the author, 15 January 2005.

34 Herbert Vogel, statement (ca. 1990–91) in Richard Marshall, "An Interview with Herbert and Dorothy Vogel," in Lipschutz-Villa, *Richard Tuttle*, 80 (emphasis added).

35 Tuttle, quoted in Paul Gardner, "Odd Man In," *ARTnews* 103 (April 2004): 105; and in "Drawing Matters," 7.

36 Dorothy Vogel, statement (ca. 1990–91), in Marshall, "Interview," 74.

37 See note 6.

38 Tuttle, statement to the author, 21 December 2004; "no connection," see note 2.

39 Tuttle, statement to the author, 10 December 2004.

40 Tuttle, statement of 16 February 1998, *Small Sculptures of the 70s* (Zurich: Annemarie Verna Galerie, 1998), unpaginated.

41 Tuttle, commentary on *Rest, Small Sculptures of the 70s*, unpaginated.

42 Tuttle distinguishes the experience of his work in a private, casual setting such as the New York apartment of Herbert and Dorothy Vogel from the experience of the same or related work in the formal space of a public exhibition. The private setting can become a kind of "laboratory," but in the sense of an environment for discussion, exchange, and the realization of changing sensations, as opposed to systematically controlled experiment (Tuttle, conversation with the author, 11 December 2004).

43 Tuttle, statement in *Richard Tuttle: Portland Works 1976* (Boston: Thomas Segal Gallery; Cologne: Galerie Karsten Greve, 1988), reprinted in *Richard Tuttle: Community* (Chicago: Arts Club of Chicago, 1999), 26.

44 Herbert Vogel, in Marshall, "Interview," 85. Compare Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge: "I guess I play a little game. I think my work is full of puns. Whereas if I use a very inexpensive material, I'll tend to give it enormous respect. Or if I use a very expensive material, it might even be hidden inside a particular piece."

45 Richard Tuttle, "In Which to Find Significance," in *Richard Tuttle, Selected Works: 1964–1994* (Tokyo: Sezon Museum of Art, 1995), 13–14.

46 The first, fourth, and fifth sentences of this quotation are from Tuttle, interview by Couderc, in Froment, *Richard Tuttle: Wire Pieces*, 37–38; the second and third sentences are from a statement to the author, 21 December 2004, in response to a request for elaboration.

47 Richard Tuttle, "The Good and the Colors" (20 July 1986), in Froment, *Richard Tuttle: Wire Pieces*, 35.

48 See note 13.

49 Tuttle, *Richard Tuttle: Community*, 14.

50 See note 3.

51 Tuttle, *Richard Tuttle: Community*, 20.

52 *3rd Rope Piece* was the topic of several conversations between Tuttle and the author, conducted by e-mail and telephone during December 2004, from which the two quoted statements have been drawn.

53 See note 21.

54 Agnes Martin, handwritten note (ca. 1972) reproduced in *Agnes Martin*, ed. Hermann Kern (Munich: Kunstraum München, 1973), 64.

55 See note 6.

56 Nor does he accept the notion of liberating art through spontaneity, a concept often aligned with an artistic abstraction of the means, as in Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *ARTnews* 51 (December 1952): 22–23, 48–50. "I call [spontaneity] crap," Tuttle said in the interview by Berssenbrugge, "only because I myself can't imagine what spontaneity is." In the later, November session, Tuttle added: "It was just pointed out to me that the reason I may not understand spontaneity is because I'm right in the middle of spontaneity. Therefore, it's assumed a kind of role of the invisible in my art."

57 On the late-nineteenth-century context and its aftermath, see Richard Shiff, "Puppet and Test Pattern: Mechanicity and Materiality in Modern Pictorial Representation," in *From Energy to Information: Representation in Science and Technology, Art, and Literature*, ed. Bruce Clarke and Linda Dalrymple Henderson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 327–50; idem., "Apples and Abstraction," in *Impressionist Still Life*, ed. Eliza E. Rathbone and George T. M. Shackelford (Washington, D.C.: Phillips Collection, 2001), 42–47, 227–28.

58 See note 12.

59 Félix Fénéon, *Les impressionnistes en 1886*, "L'Impressionnisme" (1887), reprinted in *Félix Fénéon: Oeuvres plus que complètes*, ed. Joan U. Halperin, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1970), 1:36, 67.

60 Tuttle, interview by Berssenbrugge.

61 Tuttle, statement to the author, 7 December 2004; Tuttle, quoted by Ingrid Schaffner, "The Spaces In Between," in *Richard Tuttle, In Parts, 1998–2001*, by Charles Bernstein and Ingrid Schaffner (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 2001), unpaginated.

62 See note 20.

63 Tuttle might well disagree. In 1990, he stated: "If I located a work at a certain height and that work was right, it would be right whether or not the viewer were seven feet tall or...a child three feet tall" (interview by Berssenbrugge).

64 Ibid.

65 Richard Tuttle, "Manifesto," in *Richard Tuttle: Manifesto*, inside back cover. My quotation eliminates numerals used to identify Tuttle's four successive points. Tuttle's remarks are vaguely Wittgensteinian: "You ought not to point to the color [the blue of the sky] with your hand, but with your attention.... Don't we at least *mean* something quite different when we look at a color and name our color-*impression*? It is as if we detached the color-*impression* from the object, like a membrane. (This ought to arouse our suspicions.)" (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe [New York: Macmillan, 1958], 96 [emphasis in original]). See also Tuttle's statement of 1989 quoted in note 31. Tuttle's discussion of color—that it can acquire its structure in the mind—also has a Peircean resonance: "A *quality* [such as light blue] is a consciousness. I do not say a *waking* consciousness—but still, something of the nature of consciousness. A *sleeping* [dreaming?] consciousness, perhaps. A possibility, then, or potentiality [of some quality], is a particular *tinge* of consciousness" (Charles Sanders Peirce, "The Origin of the Universe" [1898], in *Collected Papers*, ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur W. Burks, 8 vols. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958–60], 6:149 [emphasis in original; paragraphing suppressed]).

66 Tuttle may have been responding to a revelation experienced somewhat earlier, when he pondered the twist in a beer-can tab. The twist seemed to represent a nonposition between positions, emblematic of process and change (Tuttle, statement to the author, 17 January 2005, paraphrased roughly; also, interview by Berssenbrugge). Compare *Study for Twist (1)* (1972; pl. 165).

67 See note 6.

Siegel, Katy, “As Far as Language Goes,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

by Katy Siegel

AS FAR AS LANGUAGE GOES

365 Richard Tuttle designing the endsheets for the hardcover edition of this volume at Green Dragon Office, Los Angeles, 2005

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

ONE (SUBTRACTION)

The work is self-justification, by default, through rebellion, like the number, –1.

RICHARD TUTTLE, 1972[1]

When he moved to New York in 1963, Richard Tuttle began his first painting there by writing three sentences by the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead on a canvas.[2] He then painted over them with semitransparent paint. Tuttle believed that he had to get rid of language, ironically, in order to communicate. Today he sees that first work rather differently, as a painting of "ambiguity": on the one hand, language was "obscured, attacked, destroyed"; on the other, even after he laid on the top coat, the words shone through as both the ground of the painting and a kind of architectural structure.[3] His early rejection and later conflicted embrace of language distinguish Tuttle's approach from those of artists of either moment, freeing him to create his own particular relationship to letters, numbers, words, symbols, and books.

Just two years after that first painting, in 1965, Tuttle had a New York solo exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery titled *Richard Tuttle: Constructed Paintings*. These painted wooden reliefs, made in 1964–65, are sometimes referred to as ideograms or pictographs; the artist prefers the term *glyph*. Some of them resemble the objects that their titles denote: the rounded arc of *Hill*, the stocky *Torso*, and the radiating *Fountain*. Others refer to their titles through color (the red *Fire*), while *House* invokes pictorial representation, because it *looks* like a house, as well as linguistic signification, because it also resembles a double letter *H*. Another of these first reliefs, *Equals*, references a mathematical symbol; like Jasper Johns's *Target* (1958), it both represents a symbol and is an actual instance of one.

plate 63

plate 292

plate 51 / plate 50

plate 43

plate 47

These playful, bright objects move between common, familiar symbolic systems and a more personal, imaginary one. Combining concrete plainness and a fantastic aspect, they contrast sharply with other art of the time using language. Although Tuttle had some interest in Beat culture, the reliefs are far from either the surrealist sensibility of Wallace Berman or the neo-Dada attitudes of Fluxus, nor do they at all coincide with the interests and attitudes of the artists who would come to be known as conceptual. The latter—Joseph Kosuth, Mel Bochner, John Baldessari, and Lawrence Weiner, among others—turned to language to communicate more directly and clearly, believing that language, because it is conventional, is reliable and definitive, as opposed to the seductive but ambiguous nature of visual art. These beliefs may seem naive now, after years of poststructuralist insistence on language's indeterminacy. Today, Tuttle looks prescient in his lightly worn mistrust of language, whose arbitrary nature these early reliefs effortlessly express.

366 **Story with Seven Characters** 1965
Woodcuts on paper, board, and tape, ed. of 7
12 1/8 x 11 1/4 x 1/8 in.
Published by Richard Tuttle, New York

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

The early constructed paintings also reject the antiexpressive absoluteness of Pop art, which had so recently confirmed its triumph over Abstract Expressionism. Critics of the time often mentioned the "trembling sensibility" of Tuttle's reliefs, as evidenced by their uneven contours, the result of the artist drawing by hand on paper templates rather than cutting with a straightedge.[4] This is one of the reiterated (and not necessarily incorrect) clichés about Tuttle's art: that it is one of sensibility, a truism often wedded to the assertion that his work is filled "with inward meanings," that it favors experience over absolute, obdurate materiality.[5] (Ten years later, this idea would reach its most influential formulation in Marcia Tucker's essay for her Whitney Museum of American Art catalogue, in which she asserted that Tuttle's work is not understood but felt.[6])

At the time Tuttle was making these reliefs, he started making books as well. The first, *Sparrow* (1965), is a lovely wordless narrative in which pairs of yellow and pink forms appear, page by page, to form a circle; the narrative then reverses, as a circle of blue-gray shapes is undone one by one. Flipping through the book is like watching the assembly and dismantling of *Fountain*, one of the reliefs made that same year, a circular form constructed from the same shapes used in *Sparrow*, here realized in white-painted wood. The book allows Tuttle to take the same shapes he used in the sculpture and animate them, adding time, motion, and narrative. In 1965 Tuttle also produced what is still perhaps his best-known book, *Story with Seven Characters*. The book's "story" develops through the spatial and temporal relationships between seven symbols—some of which also appear in his contemporaneous reliefs and in later work—which are introduced on the first page of the book.

plates 358–59

plate 366

Story was made using woodcuts, the earliest form of book printing; the technique also connects two- and three-dimensional objects, in that a woodblock itself is a sculpted thing used to make a graphic mark. Interestingly, Tuttle's name for his symbol-like shapes—glyph—links these two aspects: the term originally referred to a carved or sculptural representation, and then also to a pictographic mark, and has come to designate a typographic character. There is a second productive ambiguity here, one suggested by the term *character* in the book's title—are these shapes characters in their resemblance to alphabetic forms? Or are they characters in the sense of being actors in a theatrical narrative? Because single characters often repeat on the same page, the former seems more likely; a being cannot exist more than once in a single place, at a single moment, while a symbol can. But in the imaginary space of the book, the artist can suspend this tension, leaving the characters to act both as individual beings and iterable signs.

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

An even more explicit reference to language, although still imaginative and opaque, can be found in Tuttle's *Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)* (1966). In this, one of several works based on the Latin alphabet, or at least the number of elements in it, the artist cut out twenty-six letterlike forms in metal and exhibited them alternately on the floor, the wall, or on top of a pedestal.[7] Some of the shapes lie flat, others are bent and twisted, posing en pointe or seemingly caught in the act of sitting up. Because twenty-six symbols suggest, to most English speakers, a complete linguistic apparatus, this work implies that we can comprehend our world and organize our understanding through a representational system. But which system? While some of Tuttle's glyphs can be recognized as letters— we can identify a *B* and a *T*, for example—others are completely unfamiliar. These "letters" remind us of the radically arbitrary and conventional nature of any actual alphabet, including our own, and suggest the possibility of others whose representational value would be no less for being opaque to us. This "other" alphabet could belong to an imaginary foreign culture, or even to a single individual rather than a society. Maybe Tuttle felt that he needed a new alphabet in order to say what he wanted to say.

plate 57

plate 56 / plate 18

TWO (ADDITION)

The difference between two apples and "two" seems like the turning point in history to me.

RICHARD TUTTLE, 1975[8]

One of my favorite quotes is by Niels Bohr where he said, "On Earth we're only capable of doing one thing at one time, but in the universe we must assume we can do two things at the same time." It's almost that the pressure on people in the 20th century is that in fact you do do two things at a time, which is to define your place on Earth as well as find your place in the universe.

RICHARD TUTTLE, 1997[9]

Tuttle has said more than once that the early part of his oeuvre describes a process of reduction, in which the *Paper Octagonals* and wire works of the early 1970s were for him a final step, the paper pieces being skin and the wire works being bones. From the mid-1970s forward, his work turned from subtraction to addition. He not only added formal complexity and the flesh of materiality, as he began to concentrate more on three-dimensional work; he also added actual language to his books while playing with the related category of number.

plates 23, 85–94 / plates 108–19

Tuttle's first foray into recognizable language was the wry but lovely *Book* (1974), in which a single letter of the alphabet was printed on each page, and the letters followed their customary sequence. In the flatness of its forms and the sparseness of presentation, *Book* continued Tuttle's tendency toward reduction of material at a time when his sculpture and painting were becoming more complex and volumetric. This contradiction has characterized his work since the mid-1970s,

plate 367

367 **Book** 1974
Letterpress ink on paper,
open edition, 9 7/8 x 6 3/8 x 3/8 in.
Published by Paul Bianchini Books,
Editions des Massons, Lausanne,
in collaboration with Yvon Lambert, Paris

Siegel, Katy, “As Far as Language Goes,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

which has continued to shift between flatness and depth, between, as he puts it, calligraphy and architecture. *Book* was also prophetic in the way the letters oscillate between referencing an actual language and exhibiting their concrete particularity as a beautiful aesthetic experience, the font as carefully chosen as the book's lovely gray paper.

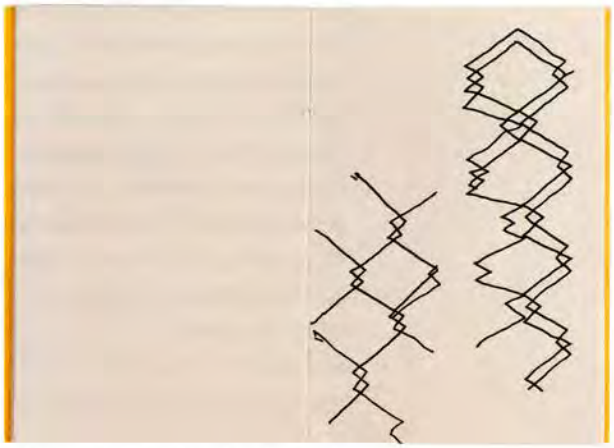
Language in the guise of words and sentences first appears in a book Tuttle produced in 1977 together with Larry Fagin, a second-generation New York School poet who had been co-director of the Poetry Project at Saint Mark's Church.[10] *Poems: Larry Fagin / Drawings: Richard Tuttle*, the first of Tuttle's many collaborations with poets, combines short, seemingly nonsensical poems ("A big joint / with a little / avocado on it") and sweet drawings, simple black lines that describe forms wavering between absurd abstraction and representations of objects, such as a wire fence. At just this moment in the late 1970s, artists like Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger began to focus in their work on the exhortative, instrumental function of language in political slogans and advertising campaigns. In his growing love for a particular kind of poetry, Tuttle took the opposite tack, using a language form notable for its anti-instrumentalism, its resistance to mass-media usage and propaganda. His favored poets, including Fagin, Barbara Guest, Charles Bernstein, and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, treat language as if meaning were not socially determined but open and malleable.

plates 368–69

While these writers assert themselves against convention, it is not in the service of predictable expressionism or personal confession. As poet Hank Lazer describes the work of one of Tuttle's most frequent collaborators, "What Bernstein's poetry involves is a resistance to (but not absolute evasion of) self-expression and the poetics of signature, voice, and a homogeneous style. Indeed, Bernstein's work does not ignore but is in constant dialogue with such forces."[11] This kind of personal impersonality rhymes with Tuttle's sensibility. While today the artist's work seems

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

more intimate than other, cooler projects of the 1960s and 1970s—such as the industrial sculpture of Donald Judd or the stark textual works by the conceptual artists mentioned above—Tuttle has never embraced a particular style, stroke, or signature. Robert Pincus-Witten tells an anecdote in a 1970 article: the critic points to a piece of wood in the artist's studio that is pierced by small nails, the points of which spell out "Tuttle."[12] The artist explains that he is thinking of "signing" his *Paper Octagonals* with this home-made printing device, and demonstrates that a handwritten signature ruins the work. His solution, a semimechanical, slightly distanced, but still handcrafted approach (basically a form of very low-tech printing) perfectly expresses his abstractly personal voice. Similarly, poets like Bernstein and Berssenbrugge show their hands through preferences and choices, not through narrating their lives.



Rather than communication or autobiography, then, Tuttle's collaborators tend to emphasize the bodily life of language, their poems always extremely precise in their line breaks and placement on the page. They often share Tuttle's dedication to formal effects that resonate physically and emotionally rather than in purely intellectual ways, and to a rather severe and demanding sense of beauty. Along with the look of the words, these poets thus often explore and exploit their sound, whether the words are read aloud or resonate in the reader's mind. Particularly in Bernstein's case, reading aloud (as the poetry seems to demand) accentuates the performative aspect of language lost when it is flattened out in print.[13]

These poets bring out an often disregarded feature of language. A letter, a word, a sentence: each is at once one and many. A word used in different sentences remains the same word even as it acquires individuality from its context, as well as from the tone with which it is spoken or the kind of mark used to write it. The dual nature of language sheds some light on Tuttle's persistent interest in and reference to number. One of his most-cited remarks is this rather cryptic one: "When I ask myself what the point is in my work of 1975–85, the answer is: the work is number. Number is held between idea and substance. The wall is idea; the work is number."[14]

This opaque yet tantalizing statement seems related to ideas about the relationship between abstraction and particularity shared by some of Tuttle's contemporaries. Writing in 1978, Fluxus artist and writer Dick Higgins spoke of "the Pythagorean system as developed in the Hermetic tradition and elsewhere as well as from Plato's *Timaeus*" as

> *based on a hierarchy of "things" at the bottom, the perceptions, feelings, and qualities associated with them next, followed by the word or* logos, *next the idea or form, penultimately the numbers or ratios, and finally the divine principle itself, conceivable only metaphorically in the Music*

368–69 **Poems: Larry Fagin / Drawings: Richard Tuttle** 1977
Lithography on paper, ed. of 200.
5 7/8 x 4 1/8 x 1/8 in.
Published by Topia Press, Bradford, New York

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

> *of the Spheres. Within such a system, a word stood not for the thing it denoted but for the idea underlying it, and was thus a symbol of pure form. As such it was closer to the essence of numbers and ratios in the hierarchy than anything it might describe, and was therefore invested with a power which we sometimes find difficult to understand.... A similar sacred power was attributed to letters, which were not seen as mechanical components of the written word, but as essential and autonomous instruments expressing the process underlying them, analogous therefore to numbers and proportions.*[15]

Pythagoras seems to have believed that the universe was structured by relations between numbers; Plato followed him in thinking of numbers as existing in the nonmaterial domain of ideas, entities more real, in fact, than physical objects, which they define. Tuttle's famous sentence seems to express something similar: that ideas ("idea" here meaning a transcendent truth rather than an intellectual conceit) provide the framework—the wall—on which concrete objects (wrestled from raw materials or "substance") made by artists can be hung.[16]

But Tuttle is a most un-Platonic Platonist, insisting that the particular is the metaphysical equal of the idea that supports it. If the number two exists in some ideal realm, as Tuttle (along with many mathematicians) believes, two pieces of plywood are just as real. And floating between them is the numeral 2, which both refers to a number and is itself a material thing, whether drawn on paper or spoken aloud. More generally, language states ideas while consisting of material signs or utterances. Every copy of *Moby-Dick* represents the same work of literature, and also exists as an individual object. From the point of view of literature, the universal—Herman Melville's novel—is what matters, rather than the particular copy. Tuttle, on the other hand, reminds us that we have access to the universal only in one particular or another.

The complicated play between concept, representation, and object figures in some of his most beautiful work, including *Interlude: Kinesthetic Drawings* (1974). *Interlude*, in an edition of twenty-four, consists of twelve lithographs of a rectangle, each side of which is marked at midpoint with an emphatically penciled dot. On each page, Tuttle made a different sweeping mark across the rectangle with a colored pencil or china marker. As the work's subtitle suggests, each of these marks follows a general gestural idea; in actual performance each mark veers from the original idea to become something particular—itself. Because these lines are kinesthetically rather than mimetically generated, matching pages in different copies of the book bear different marks, representing different experiences, different moments in time. Each one is an equally valid representation of some ideal form in the substance of the particular book.

plates 356–57

Tuttle handles language in a similar manner, moving between idea and thing to elide the normal difference between language and visual art. Language can be captured by a notation, a system of symbols (like numerals, musical notes, or letters) whose meaning is entirely determined

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

by their mutual relations. No matter which typeface is used, the letter *a* remains the same symbol in English and refers to the same class of sounds. There is no notation for art, in contrast, because any physical aspect of a picture or a sculpture is potentially significant. This is why no two objects, however similar, can be the same work.[17] (Two representations of the Virgin with Child are not the same painting in the way that two copies of *Moby-Dick* are exactly the same book.) Tuttle makes language into art, taking numerals and letters from the realm of notation to emphasize their concrete particularity. He finds his place on Earth as well as in the universe.

THREE (MULTIPLICATION)

It seems too boring to have one kind of happiness, and too schizophrenic to have two. I sense another number lurking that says what the situation really is. RICHARD TUTTLE, 1992[18]

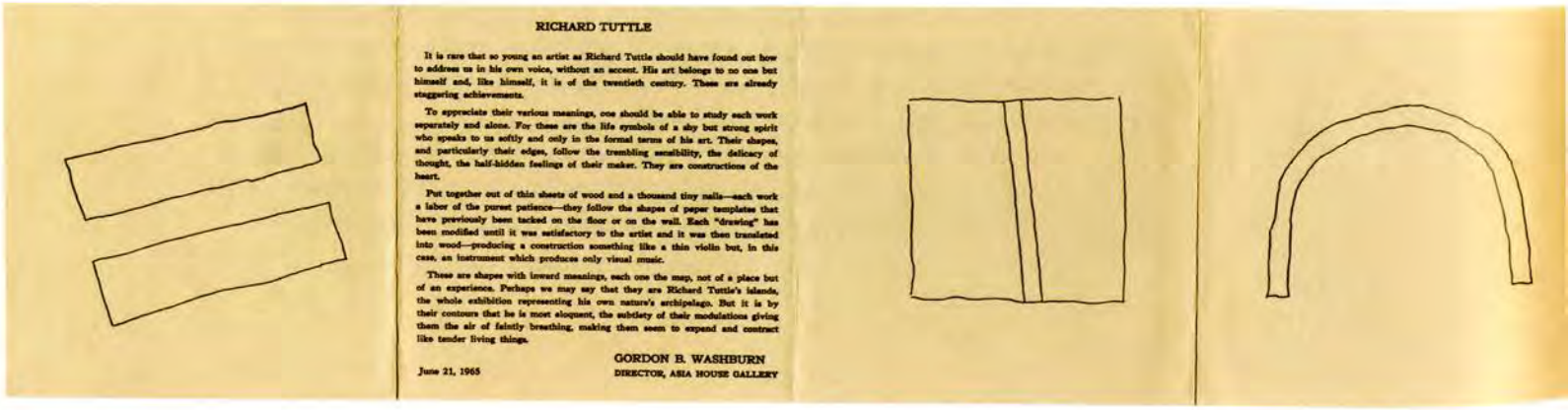
In the early 1990s, Tuttle began to exhibit his books to emphasize their physicality and particularity in display, opening, twisting, and hanging them in their exhibition vitrines. During that decade, he also made artist's books that were themselves increasingly sculptural, often wildly unusual in their scale, dimensions, pagination, and covers, including, for example, *Lonesome Cowboy Styrofoam* (1990), *Octavo for Annemarie* (1990), *Open Carefully* (2000), and *White Sails* (2001). These objects do not match our conventional expectations of a book. In some, scale amplifies the element of surprise: *White Sails* is a tiny, precious box, while *Perceived Obstacles* (2000) is long and narrow to the point of absurdity. Others are not just pages between covers but containers holding anything from a nesting series of smaller books to photographs to colored gravel. Literary "content" takes on an entirely new meaning: not just descriptions of things, but things themselves.

plate 362

plate 364

A few years earlier, Tuttle had begun to collapse the genres of the artist's book and the exhibition catalogue. Tuttle has always pushed his catalogues to be specific and original, not just a medium for carrying information. From the very beginning he has had a hand in designing them: he laid out the brochure for his first show at Betty Parsons in 1965, and chose the paper (a celadon green

plate 370



370 Brochure for the 1965 exhibition **Richard Tuttle: Constructed Paintings** at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

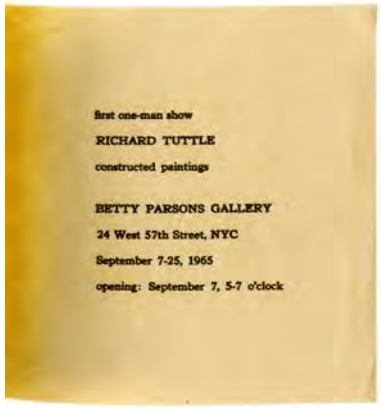
that, touchingly, still pleases him). He also worked on the catalogues for his 1971 Dallas Museum of Fine Arts exhibition and the 1979 exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.[19] These early productions have a straightforward plainness that, while lovely to look at, does not necessarily announce the artist's presence or desire to explore the genre.

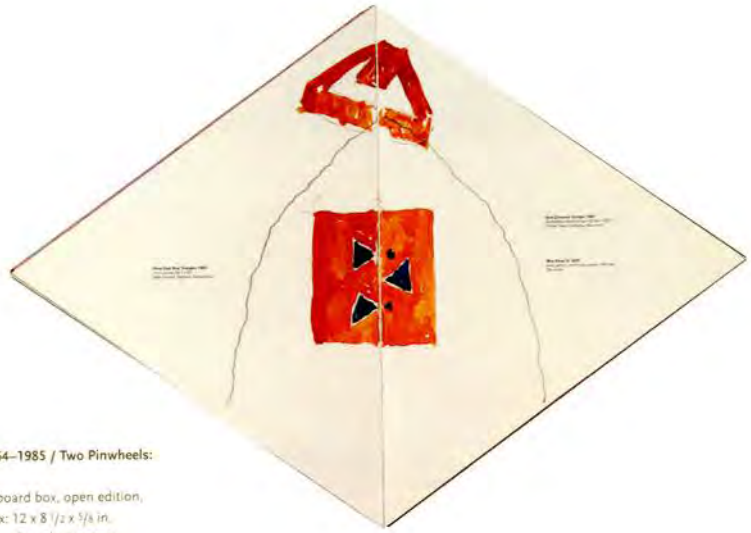
But beginning in the mid-1980s, catalogues such as *Richard Tuttle* (Mönchengladbach) and *Richard Tuttle. △s: Works 1964–1985 / Two Pinwheels: Works 1964–1985* (both 1985) expanded the genre of the exhibition catalogue, utilizing the inventiveness Tuttle had developed in creating his artist's books. The latter is a triangular book inserted in a rectangular case; when unfolded, it becomes a diamond. The Mönchengladbach catalogue, while a standard shape, combines vertical columns of reproductions on each page with a text by the artist that runs horizontally throughout the book. In *Richard Tuttle: Grey Walls Work* (1996), text and image literally intersect, lying in layers atop each other, and so challenging the independent value of either form of communication. All of Tuttle's recent catalogues visually acknowledge the text and how it interacts with the images. As he said in 1997, "If we had consistency between words and images, what would this mean since images can exceed words in communication? There is a magic which happens—and it can happen many different ways—when words and images are in consistency, do not threaten each other. I am amazed that book design is this consistency."[20]

plate 363
plate 371
plate 360

Coordinating different kinds of production in unexpected ways, Tuttle has worked not only with writers but designers, printers, curators, and, in one particularly complex collaboration—the book *One Voice in Four Parts* (1999)—with an actor, a poet, and a playwright. (That project was rooted in a theatrical event, for which Tuttle designed the makeup and costumes.) His exhibitions are themselves large-scale collaborations, particularly *Richard Tuttle, In Parts, 1998–2001*, curated by Ingrid Schaffner at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, in 2001. This was a collective endeavor undertaken by the artist, the curator, collectors, writers, and a book designer, all of whom added their visual, verbal, and emotional expressions to the artist's to create the book and the exhibition. Tuttle's process on such occasions reminds us of the social nature of all artistic production.

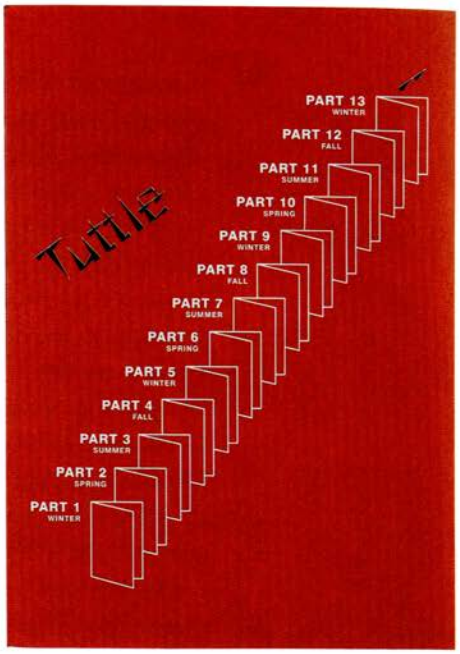
plates 372–73





371 **Richard Tuttle. △s: Works 1964–1985 / Two Pinwheels: Works 1964–1985** 1985
Lithography on paper in cardboard box, open edition, book: 11 7/8 x 8 1/4 x 1/8 in.; box: 12 x 8 1/2 x 5/8 in.
Published by Coracle Press, London; the Institute of Contemporary Art, London; and the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh

Siegel, Katy, “As Far as Language Goes,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345



372–73 **Richard Tuttle, In Parts, 1998–2001** 2001
Lithography on paper, open edition,
9 1/2 x 6 5/8 x 3/8 in.
Published by the Institute
of Contemporary Art, University
of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

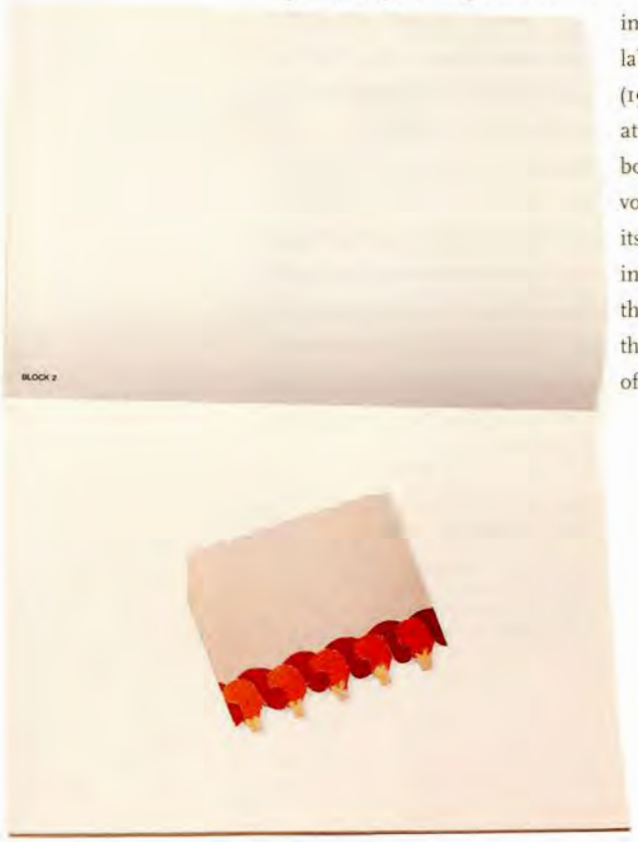
Print quality, both in the sense of the fine-art print and in the photomechanical reproduction of three-dimensional work, also plays a very important role in his catalogues and artist's books. Some, like *Interlude*, have perforated pages, so that each page can be removed for display on the wall. By encouraging the transformation of a book into a set of lithographs, Tuttle questions the distinction between the two forms. More broadly, since the mid-1980s he has paid particular attention to the way that a page provides a context for a reproduced image. Often he uses colorful designs rather than the expected bland white page to create a true home for the image, as in the gray "brick wall" of the 1990 catalogue *Richard Tuttle: Einleitung* or the colorful scribbled blocks of *Richard Tuttle: Reservations* (2000). Composing each page individually rather than relying on a conventional grid, he places each image as if he were hanging it on a wall.

In a related vein, Tuttle works beautifully with shadows (a leitmotif for him since the 1972 *Wire Pieces*) to counter the usual image-on-a-page effect. In catalogues and books such as *Richard Tuttle: XX Blocks* (1988) and *Perceived Obstacles*, the reproduced works exist not in some imagined, ideal, no-context space, but seem to throw shadows on the page, rendering these photomechanical images eerily present. Tuttle's sensitivity to photomechanical printing works against the hierarchy of painting, sculpture, print, and reproduction by giving the images in his books their own lives and independent value.

plates 109, 118–19
plate 374

It is as if Tuttle denies the secondary nature we usually assign to books, catalogues in particular. Just as he emphasizes the particularity of each use of a letter or word, he constantly strives, against the prevailing bias, to make an editioned object unique. He asks the reader to participate in individualizing not only each book, but each *copy* of it. We collaborate in completing the cover of *Richard Tuttle: Community* (1999) by stringing gold cord through the provided holes and attaching green adhesive tabs. *Perceived Obstacles* is a perfect-bound book, a type of binding that becomes so fragile on a volume of such large dimensions that each copy begins to alter its shape from the moment the reader handles it, as the pages inevitably fall out. Tuttle not only underlines the truism that the reader finishes the work in the act of reception, but adds the opposing idea that the reader speeds the inevitable process of the work's decay.

plate 361



374 **Richard Tuttle: XX Blocks** 1988
Lithography on paper, open edition,
13 x 9 1/4 x 1/4 in.
Published by Galleria Marilena
Bonomo, Bari, Italy

Siegel, Katy, “As Far as Language Goes,” *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

Perhaps, that's why the glyph, which is a level of more sure knowledge than either [number or letter], ends the book. RICHARD TUTTLE, 1990[21]

At the outset of his career, Tuttle believed that because language interfered with attempts to communicate, it needed to be obliterated or completely reimagined. Forty years later, his perspective, not surprisingly, has changed: he now accepts language as given, for better or worse, something that will always be with us. He describes language as the grain on and against which he draws, or as the frame for his work. Both ways of seeing language—as always-present ground or as contextual presence—resign him to its inevitability, and motivate him to make use of it.[22]

Still, the artist hasn't completely surrendered his low opinion of language, conventionally used.[23] Critics often complain, in the nicest possible way, about Tuttle's "gnomic" way of expressing himself, a characteristically oblique way of speaking.[24] And Tuttle himself has complained to me about people "who should know better" trying to force him into the standard Q&A model of artist interviews.[25] In fact, when interviewed, he doesn't say what you expect to hear (what the form of the "artist's statement" mandates), or even what he himself expects to say (what the repetitious nature of personal expression usually dictates). Tuttle's point is that language, like other conventional symbol systems, is inadequate for expressing truths that might be ephemeral, spiritual, or sensual, or all of these at once, like the feel of one's body in relation to a horizon line. Not surprisingly, it's impossible to extract one coherent system from his play with both standard and homemade symbols.

Reconciled to language, Tuttle never uses it the way that he is supposed to, or even the way that other artists do. The story of his relationship to language, the social means of communication, is the story of a struggle with society. If many artists of his generation used language to exploit its communicative potential, Tuttle clearly believes that this potential is outweighed by language's limitations, the conventions that restrict what can be said. He wants his work to speak of ideas and feelings that transcend the social to reach the scale of the universal, even while these ideas demand attention to the particular and individual. This ambition doesn't rule out collaboration, as we saw, or—as the form of the book itself implies—sociality. The artist can make language new; if you understand this new language, as Tuttle says, you are part of a community.[26]

Siegel, Katy, "As Far as Language Goes," *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005, pp. 333-345

NOTES

My thanks to Mel Bochner, Alexander Dumbadze, Madeleine Grynsztejn, Paul Mattick, Robert Storr, and most of all Richard Tuttle for their generosity in talking about issues discussed in this essay. Thanks as well to Tara McDowell for expert research assistance and to Chad Coerver and Joseph Newland for truly helpful editing.

1 Richard Tuttle, artist's statement, in Bruce Kurtz, "Documenta 5: A Critical Preview," *Arts Magazine* 46 (Summer 1972): 39.

2 Tuttle recalls (e-mail communication with the author, 22 November 2004) that the sentences were excerpted from the following passage: "The misconception which has haunted the ages of thought down to the present time is that these criteria are easy to apply. For example, the Greek and the medieval thinkers were under the impression that they could easily obtain clear and distinct premises which conformed to experience. Accordingly they were comparatively careless in the criticism of premises, and devoted themselves to the elaboration of deductive systems. The moderns have, equally with the Greeks, assumed that it is easy to formulate exactly expressed propositions. They have also assumed that the interrogation of experience is a straightforward operation. But they have recognized that the main effort is to be devoted to the discovery of propositions which do in fact conform to experience. Thus the moderns stress induction. The view which I am maintaining is that none of these operations are easy. In fact they are extremely difficult. Apart from a complete metaphysical understanding of the universe, it is very difficult to understand any proposition clearly and distinctly, so far as concerns the analysis of its component elements" (Alfred North Whitehead, *The Function of Reason* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1958], 68).

3 E-mail communication with the author, 12 August 2004.

4 The very first instance of this is Gordon B. Washburn, *Richard Tuttle: Constructed Paintings*, exhibition brochure (New York: Betty Parsons Gallery, 1965), unpaginated; repeated as "sensitive," for example, in Dorothy Alexander, "Conversations with the Work and the Artist," in *Mel Bochner, Barry Le Va, Dorothea Rockburne, Richard Tuttle* (Cincinnati: Contemporary Arts Center, 1975), 44.

5 Washburn, *Richard Tuttle: Constructed Paintings*, unpaginated.

6 Marcia Tucker, *Richard Tuttle* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1975), 16.

7 Others being the *Blue/Red Alphabet* (2001), reliefs painted on plywood, and a series of mixed-media prints and accompanying sculpture called *Renaissance Unframed* (1995–96).

8 Richard Tuttle, "Time's Measurement and *Interlude*'s 'Time,'" in Andrea Miller-Keller, *Matrix 10: Richard Tuttle*, exhibition brochure (Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1975), unpaginated.

9 Quote appears in Lis Bensley, "The 48," *Pasatiempo* (weekly magazine of the *Santa Fe New Mexican*), 6–12 June 1997.

10 *Poems: Larry Fagin / Drawings: Richard Tuttle* (New York: Topia Press, 1977). For full citations of other Richard Tuttle books discussed here, please see the bibliography in this volume.

11 Hank Lazer, "Charles Bernstein's 'Dark City': Polis, Policy, and the Policing of Poetry," *American Poetry Review* 24 (September–October 1995): 36.

12 Robert Pincus-Witten, "The Art of Richard Tuttle," *Artforum* 8 (February 1970): 67. In a *New York* magazine review of Tuttle's Whitney show, Thomas B. Hess asserts that in *Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)* (1966), the *T*, *U*, and *L* shapes are more strongly articulated, closer to our conventional letters than the other shapes ("Private Art Where the Public Works," *New York*, 13 October 1975, 76). The critics seem to search for a secret autobiographical content in work that appears so opaque, so abstract at first glance.

13 See Bernstein's introduction to *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

14 The original statement ended, "The wall is idea, the work is substance" (quoted in *Richard Tuttle* [Mönchengladbach, Germany: Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, 1985], 124–25), and it is in this form that the remark is usually quoted. Tuttle caught his own logical slip and later suggested that perhaps this statement should be revised to read "The wall is idea, the work is number" (letter from Richard Tuttle to Jennifer Gross, cited in Gross, "Richard Tuttle: Reframing Modernism, 1965–1995," Ph.D. dissertation, CUNY Graduate Center, 1999, 153).

15 Dick Higgins, "Introduction," in *George Herbert's Pattern Poems: In Their Tradition*, excerpted in *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, no. 1 (February 1978): 17.

16 We might think of the way Tuttle's wire works point to different levels of meaning (from the three-dimensional wire to the drawn line to the shadow) as paralleling the way that conceptual artists investigate levels of meaning or reality. I would suggest that this is something conceptual artists learned from artists such as Tuttle working with more visual and material concerns.

17 A modern philosopher who has dealt with these issues is Nelson Goodman, an anti-Platonist with a very different set of terms. The common subject for Goodman and Tuttle is the relationship between the individual and the abstract, or the universal and a particular object. Tuttle's use of language is autographic in Goodman's sense, meaning that the physical presence of the work is original and necessary. See Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), 112–13.

18 Richard Tuttle, *Charge to Exist* (Winterthur, Switzerland: Kunstmuseum Winterthur, 1992), statement on reverse side of single-page book.

19 E-mail communication with the author, 16 September 2004.

20 Richard Tuttle, in *I Thought I Was Going on a Trip But I Was Only Going Down Stairs* (North York, Ontario: Art Gallery of York University, 1997), unpaginated. This is a good example of a particularly Tuttle-ish strategy: putting together two disparate things, and finding a third term that bridges them.

21 Richard Tuttle, *Lonesome Cowboy Styrofoam* (New York: Blum Helman Gallery; Santa Fe: Gallery Casa Sin Nombre, 1990), insert card number 7.

22 For language as grain, see "Knock on Wood," Tuttle statement from SFMOMA exhibition files. For frame as language, see Tuttle's letter to Erich Franz, excerpted in *Perceived Obstacles* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchandlung Walter König, 2001), unpaginated.

23 Richard Tuttle, letter to Martin, dated 30 May 1995, SFMOMA exhibition files; interview with Tuttle in Gross, "Richard Tuttle: Reframing Modernism," 457.

24 See, for example, Nancy Princenthal's excellent article on his books, "Numbers of Happiness: Richard Tuttle's Books," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 24 (July–August 1993): 81–86.

25 While he can seem and is often portrayed as somewhat otherworldly, Tuttle clearly has an amused awareness of his image as a difficult communicator—in an interview published in a 1996 catalogue for the Camden Arts Centre, an interviewer seems to struggle with the recalcitrant subject; at the end, we find that Tuttle wrote the whole thing himself. There is also a very funny interview (or "attempted interview" in the words of the questioner) in which he completely frustrates a usually glib and witty journalist with his koanic one-word replies to questions. See Paul Nesbitt, "Interview," *Richard Tuttle: Grey Walls Work* (London: Camden Arts Centre, 1996), 45–50; Adrian Dannatt, "NY Artist Q&A: Richard Tuttle," *Art Newspaper*, February 2000, 69.

26 E-mail communication with the author, 12 August 2004.

Kimmelman, Michael, "40 Years of Making Much Out of Little," *NYTimes.com*, November 11, 2005

The New York Times

40 Years of Making Much Out of Little

Michael Kimmelman | November 11, 2005

Installation view of *The Art of Richard Tuttle* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 10, 2005-February 5, 2006). Photograph by Sheldan C. Collins, courtesy the Whitney.

HERE are a few things you might not notice in Richard Tuttle's sublime retrospective at the Whitney Museum. Blue gels tint the wall at the entrance that has his early tin "Letters" on it. The lights cast in slight shadow the shallow letters, which are a little like metal versions of toddlers' toys in cryptic alphabet shapes. "Replace the Abstract Picture Plane" -- a grid of painted plywood panels, jaunty and framed in white -- is off to the right. It looks as if it stands out from the wall. That's because it does, barely: the panels extend beyond their frames by the width of the plywood (or twice that width where the plywood sheets are doubled), while the backs of the picture frames aren't quite flush with the wall. They hang a quarter of an inch away.

Such whispering details, of which there are an endless number here, are at the heart of Mr. Tuttle's rapturous brand of intimism. For 40 years he has murmured the ecstasies of paying close attention to the world's infinitude of tender incidents, making oddball assemblages of prosaic ephemera, which, at first glance, belie their intense deliberation and rather monumental ambition. Never mind the humdrum materials and small scale. In the ambition department, Mr. Tuttle yields no ground to the Richard Serras of this world.

He has dreamed up his work out of such ostensible nothings as a three-inch segment of plain white clothesline nailed at the middle and on both ends to an otherwise empty white wall. Notice the cord's frayed edges; where the center nail interrupts the plaits; how, because it is so vanishingly small, the cord commands a psychic space in direct disproportion to its size. Pushing the buttons of skeptics for whom such stuff doesn't even qualify as art in the first place, the work addresses anyone with open eyes and an open mind about the basic ingredients of art-making, not to mention a little sense of humor.

Since the 1960's, and out of not just cord but also Styrofoam and florist wire and bubble wrap and twigs, Mr. Tuttle, now 64, has devised objects whose status is not quite sculpture or drawing or painting but some combination of the three, and whose exquisiteness is akin to jewelry. His show is a cross between a kindergarten playroom and a medieval treasury.

It arrives as a second act, 30 years after his last retrospective at the Whitney traumatized the New York art world. Back then, conservatives naturally heaped scorn on Mr. Tuttle's inventions, which, as the critic Thomas Hess then responded in ArtNews, only attested to the work's deceptive radicalism. "When you read such words as 'remorselessly and irredeemably egregiously pathetic a bore and a waste arid debacle farce' from a critic who once called Jackson Pollock 'second rate' and Willem de Kooning a 'pompier,' " Hess wrote after Hilton Kramer's review in The New York Times, "then it's probable that something importantly different has come to notice."

It had. But it was hard for many people to see. Mr. Tuttle started out making small paper cubes with geometric cutouts. Ostensible riffs on Donald Judd's heavy metal boxes, they substituted handmade delicacy and lightness for industrial weight, coyly suggesting a kind of innocence while extrapolating on art's fundamental role as language.

"Letters" followed, along with "Constructed Paintings": canvases also shaped like nonsense signs, painted in catchy, offbeat colors, the shapes not sharp-edged but quavery, after faint pencil drawings. Mr. Tuttle, in nudging Minimalism toward personal touch and private speech, was here abetted by the somewhat paradoxical examples of Agnes Martin and Barnett Newman. Poetic discretion slyly combined with grandiose aspirations.

The Whitney retrospective opens with his succeeding "Cloth Pieces," of the mid-60's, dancing across a far wall and spilling onto the floor. Exploring a no-man's land between painting and sculpture, they pick up on the same eccentric shapes as the letters. Lightly tinted, crumpled pieces of heavy fabric, hand cut and roughly hemmed, with no front or back, no up or down, made to hang on the wall or not, they also look

Installation view of *The Art of Richard Tuttle* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 10, 2005-February 5, 2006). Photograph by Sheldan C. Collins, courtesy the Whitney.

best together rather than one at a time. Mr. Tuttle's early efforts occasionally favored metaphysics over sheer visual loveliness, although the early drawings, on which many works are based, place delicate marks just so on otherwise blank sheets of paper. They are like heavenly doodles, as ethereal as angels' breath.

Organized by Madeleine Grynsztejn for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, where its presentation was bigger and more strictly chronological, the exhibition occupies the Whitney's third floor, which is ordinarily not a congenial space but now has been given an almost domestic feel. Works are hung close together, with aptly unconventional irregularity. (Many of them will rotate in and out during the run of the show, as works did 30 years ago.) The Whitney curator is David Kiehl, who, in clear psychic sync with Mr. Tuttle, has made the exhibition into something of a homecoming -- the installation affectionately recalling aspects of the 1975 show while casting more recent work in newly designed galleries that serve Mr. Tuttle's high-minded, obsessive-compulsive predilections.

Perhaps partly in reaction to the reaction against that first retrospective and in general keeping with the art world's turn from his own postminimal austerity toward 1980's extravagance, Mr. Tuttle allowed himself an increasing opulence in the late 70's. The evolution unfolds in rooms toward the back of the show. The first has Mr. Tuttle's utterly fine wire pieces from the early 70's: almost invisible pencil lines drawn on the wall; thin wires tracing the contours of the lines and springing from the walls, casting shadows that make yet more lines.

Wall assemblages from the early 80's, in an adjacent room, which seems like a world away, look baroque by comparison: twigs, blocks, thicker wire and corrugated cardboard are joined into Rube Goldbergian confections, brightly painted, divinely balanced. To these Tinkertoy devices, Mr. Tuttle added light bulbs during the late 80's. Their shimmery effect, collected in the last of the back galleries, is reminiscent of a sacristy.

How you approach such art is up to you. Purely abstract, made up of endless parts, joints and painterly marks that affect happenstance, they have no central focus, no beginning, no end, but sometimes a narrative peg. A group of palm-size drawings in faux-ornate yellow cardboard frames hang across a gallery corner (the corner and frames make a triangle), bearing gently colored marks and symbols inspired by Egypt. Watercolors, loosely brushed in frames shaped like railroad tracks, suggest Chinese paintings. Floor sculptures that resemble teepees summon up the Southwest, while those early wire pieces, making shapes from simple to ornate, are explicitly meant to allude to Archaic and Rococo art.

But the beauty of Mr. Tuttle's art is ultimately in its concentration on materials for their own sake, and the space they occupy. He regards these the way we hope to be regarded -- individually, patiently. If what results is sometimes a trifle, so is life sometimes. There is nothing more difficult in art than to make work that looks easy. A shaman with waferboard and colored tissue paper, Mr. Tuttle operates far above the run of ready-made conceptualists with their throwaway aesthetics, because of the urgency and occasional melancholy he brings to even the simplest things.

It happens that the tranquil 19th-century American Luminist painter John Frederick Kensett is one of his ancestors. With Kensett, Mr. Tuttle shares a refined respect for plain material facts and a fascination with immaterial ones like light, which verges on the spiritual. A work like "20 Pearls (12)," painted on cheap pressed wood scraps cut into florid shapes, is a mélange of nature and culture, shot through with flowery pink, its central motifs thin washes of orange-gold paint that delicately shift in changing light.

Standing near "20 Pearls (12)," looking across the next two galleries in the show, you may notice how the edge of a work called "New Mexico, New York No. 14" in the far room lines up with the edge of the wall in the nearer room on which is hanging "Sand Tree 2."

"New Mexico, New York No. 14" is shaped like a droopy red envelope with a needle's eye looping across its middle. "Sand Tree 2" deploys a large, irregular green ovoid with a clutter of small wood crosses, from which issue forth broken Styrofoam chunks embedded with curling strips of red paper. The chunks skip up to the end of the wall.

So from the doorway they can meet up in your line of sight with "New Mexico, New York No. 14" -- the wood crosses of one bookending the needle's eye of the other, making a fresh, third work.

It is not a coincidence. Nothing ever is in Mr. Tuttle's perfect world.

Wagner, Anne M., “Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2005, pp. 266–268

REVIEWS

Wagner, Anne M., “Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2005, pp. 266–268

RICHARD TUTTLE

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM
OF MODERN ART

ANNE M. WAGNER

Opposite page: **Richard Tuttle, *Yellow Dancer*, 1965,** acrylic on plywood, 43 x 29 x 1¾". This page: **View of “The Art of Richard Tuttle,” San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005.**

There are several artists of the 1960s generation whose portraits have become the icons of an era: Think of Robert Smithson standing alone at the end of his jetty, or Eva Hesse clowning in her studio, or a masked and booted Richard Serra wielding that ladleful of lead. Now try to summon a comparable image of Richard Tuttle. Chances are you will fail.

It may well be that the current Tuttle retrospective—a major exhibition organized by Madeleine Grynsztejn of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and scheduled to travel to New York, Des Moines, Dallas, Chicago, and Los Angeles—will change things. If so, the newly anointed icon will look quite different from its prototypes, and display an oddly elusive saint. Don’t ask *him* to mug for the camera. He’s too involved in his tasks to strike the required pose.

But of course he is posing even so. In most photos, Tuttle turns his back to the observer and does something invisible on or to the wall. In others, he kneels above a length of material (paper or fabric, mostly) stretched out on the floor. In a few, he fusses intently with scrappy lengths of wood and piles of cloth. If the sheer workmanlike anonymity of these images seems eloquent, this is not simply due to the jeans and T-shirt the artist routinely wears. The photos seem to figure the ambiguities of Tuttle’s role in recent art: Not unlike the best of his work, he looks both present and absent, aggressive and recessive. What this means, in career terms, is that although routinely deemed an “artist’s artist” by the cognoscenti, he is far from widely known. Unlike Serra or Smithson, there is only one large-scale work by Tuttle (a decorative wall-size tiling in an upscale Miami development) permanently on view in a (quasi-) public outdoor space. Unlike Hesse, his comfortable New Jersey origins are without tragedy or romance. And unlike all three of these contemporaries, Tuttle’s importance to art since the ’70s has yet to be properly gauged. For although he thrives on exhibitions—they are essential to his practice, in complex ways—he has never had a museum retrospective on this ambitious scale: No less than 329 works are listed in the exhibition catalogue. But this impressive number doesn’t really tell the whole story. Not only are many pieces part of larger suites that are not shown in their entirety, but several are multipartite in and of themselves. Very much so: Two have forty elements, another has twenty-seven. If few other artists so routinely conflate the singular with the multiple, making one into many (and vice versa), few recent retrospectives have managed to offer a similarly compendious sampling of a full four decades, yet been rigorously selective even so.

Tuttle is prolific. No wonder that what he is doing with his back to the camera is making works of art. I’d like to be more specific about his products, but doing so demands some delicacy. What is most exciting—and sometimes most frustrating—about Tuttle’s pieces is the way they inhabit a special twilight zone that keeps them hovering somewhere between their status as images and their existence as things. Which is to suggest, of course, that they are neither paintings nor sculpture. Sooner or later, every commentator is forced to make this basic point.

To say this, however, is to my mind to say next to nothing at all. Why should the work want or need to come across as either? Tuttle began his career at that now-distant moment in the mid-’60s when the settled authority of both media had been undermined. The boundaries only got more fluid as “systems” and “specific objects” and “intermedia” staked their various claims. To judge from the evidence, Tuttle was never much interested in any of these categories as such, just as he set little store by describing or illustrating the look or feel of tangible objects as encountered in the world. At the same time, however, his processes were utterly specific, his works relentlessly handmade. By 1972, in a statement for the catalogue of Documenta 5, he had formulated the new principle that guided his approach: “To make something that looks like itself is . . . the problem, the solution.”

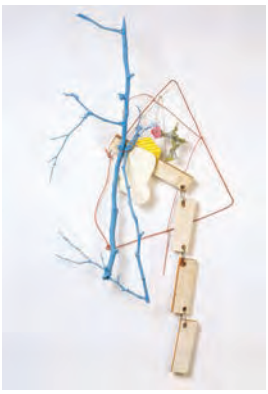
Shouldn’t Tuttle have been elected to the formalist academy, or pressed into service as the poster child for the Beauty so often bemoaned as in short supply?

What a resolution! Here is Tuttle in full gnomic form: circular, elusive, working towards an unsayable idea. Yet to aim for one’s artworks to look like themselves is to do more than give voice to a tautology. This is so, even if the declaration is tautological to the hilt. It also raises the flag for autonomy, originality, and the integral presence of the work of art. With the ’90s behind us, the banner may seem more faded than beleaguered, but for decades it has been Tuttle’s steadfast mission to hold it up.

Given these standards, you might expect rather different critical fortunes than have been the artist’s lot. Should he not have been elected to the formalist academy, or pressed into service as the poster child for the Beauty so often bemoaned as in short supply? Well, yes and no. Such expectations would fail to acknowledge that for Tuttle’s art to “look like itself” is not just a question of appearance—though this is crucial—but of how it inhabits the world. Tuttle’s allegiance is to immediacy and to the senses (not the intellect), and to achieve that extraordinary measure of presence—to make it rhetorical—he must rely utterly on space, light, line, color, shape, size, scale, and surface as the mainstays of his art.

The list is long, and it is hard to think of many of Tuttle’s contemporaries, Hesse excepted, bringing quite these same deep-seated formal considerations—let alone so many of them—to the drawing board. (For some, the drawing board itself is a dinosaur.) But now play the same list back against the sorts of material the artist has chosen for the task: paint, watercolor, wire, paper, rope, plywood, pencil, masking tape, twigs, Styrofoam, waferboard, starch paste, dyed canvas, metal pipe, a Pepsi can. It’s all so ordinary—that’s the issue. A *bricoleur* and forager, over the years Tuttle has aimed to turn this completely recognizable and pedestrian collection into

Wagner, Anne M., “Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, October 2005, pp. 266–268



From left: **Richard Tuttle, *Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room, 6*, 1983,** wood, wire, acrylic, matboard, string, and cloth, 40 x 20½ x 12¼". **View of "The Art of Richard Tuttle," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2005.** Foreground: Richard Tuttle, *There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find*, 1988. Photo: Ben Blackwell. ***Waferboard 8*, 1996,** acrylic on waferboard, 36½ x 22¼".

something else—something, to repeat, that looks like itself, though is only ever a putting together of assorted stuff. The results can be more declaratively assembled than the most loyal Constructivist could ever have managed, and yet more magical, more vertiginously impromptu, than any Surrealist in his wildest dreams. For example, although the mundane elements of the breathtaking *Monkey's Recovery for a Darkened Room, 6*, 1983, seem entirely random, its chained links of wood still manage to fall with odd (sausagelike?) abandon, while two soaring blue branches are just held in place by the energies of a red wire loop.

Sometimes, of course, Tuttle fails. Inevitably: Making something from (nearly) nothing is never easy, and the risk in courting such simplicity is that a work might end up looking like nothing much at all. Indeed, Tuttle's version of minimalism, first conceived as a corrective to Minimalism proper (that of Robert Morris in 1964, or of Donald Judd the following year) can cut dangerously close to the bone. But that danger is built into his process, in part because cutting is one of the artist's signature means. From the beginning, that action, as carried out on cloth, plywood, galvanized iron, paper, or lengths of rope, was second only to drawing as a basic move: The one led to the other, and in his hands the two are perfectly paired. The shapes that emerged—a quasi-new language, they even include in *Letters (The Twenty-Six Series)*, 1966, an antialphabet of possible building blocks—take their distance from the sharp edges and precise angles of the cube. Not a man to be ruled by a ruler, Tuttle makes lines and edges bent on preserving the slightly tremulous memory of the moving hand. Crispness is never an issue, nor is industry, let alone the machine. Tuttle's shapes echo and accommodate each other; they meet gently, with a tentative touch. When in the late '80s the artist makes use of two titles that reference gendered habits and expectations—*There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find* and *Done by Women Not by Men*—there's every reason to think that these phrases speak to what seems subtle and improvised in the low-key look of his work.

Tuttle's work can be more declaratively assembled than that of the most loyal Constructivist, and yet more magical than any Surrealist in his wildest dreams.

Over the decades, Tuttle's art has held on for dear life to these effects. One result, I think, is immediacy—that diffidently assertive look of presence or being at which his art is so often aimed. If my phrasing seems vague or awkward, this is because such effects are difficult to name. They also took time to perfect. In 1969, for example, Scott Burton spoke of the work's "integrity in all circumstances," yet also asserted that it places "absolutely no demands on its situation." At that juncture, when Tuttle's most recent important achievement was to have trumped painting with a set of home-dyed canvas octagonals in 1967—heirs to both kites and banners—this might have seemed the case. But within a few more years the voice of Tuttle's work would become ever more active, its look more graphic, though less signlike, and the space around it considerably more important to what it seems to do. Pasted directly to the wall, the long 1970 series of "Paper Octagonals" owes everything—color, texture, even visibility itself—to context and the moment. The same is true of Tuttle's next work in series, the "Wire Pieces" of 1972. Like the "Paper Octagonals," their means are minimal—a drawn line, a length of wire, and some shadow—and their perception wholly a matter of a moment in time and a place in space.

If these two series are at once the least physically present and the most spatially dependent works in the exhibition, they are also those that most thoroughly engage the aesthetic dicta of their day. Perceptual contingency could be given no greater play. Nor could impermanence. For these works to appear at all, each must be remade, not once or twice but again and again—for example, at every stop of the show's long tour. If a template is pressed into service for the "Paper Octagonals," in the case of the "Wire Pieces," Tuttle does his remaking via muscular memory, recalling how, in physical terms, he once drew the requisite line. No work (re)produced by this method can ever be precisely the same. Tuttle is the Heraclitus among artists, putting into practice a philosophy of unity and flux.

And beauty. In tracing Tuttle's development, this exhibition makes it clear that in recent years the artist has simplified (rather than minimalized) his work. He turned his effort towards achieving presence mainly through shaped and painted surfaces (either plywood or waferboard), and thus through both added and inherent color, texture, and line. Again, "neither-painting-nor-sculpture" seems the appropriate (non)word. If such means are still understated, their effects can now be spatially explosive, even wildly lush. Now Burton's sense of a practice that places no demands on its physical situation seems spot on. Instead, the burden is on the viewer to savor and respond. This is not hard to do. The leaflike blooms of *Waferboard 8*, 1996, bear, in their blue, yellow, green, black, and pink forms, the hues of sun, sky, earth, grass, and body; the winding lines of *New Mexico, New York,* #24, 1998, have the flow and scale of a great alluvial flood plane; the puffy pinks of *20 Pearls (5)*, 2003, invoke dawn's cloud and the springtime peony. Although one doesn't have to strain to make these analogies, the fact of the matter is that even now, at its most lyrical moment, Tuttle's art still looks, as it has always meant to, most like itself. Their particular solutions notwithstanding, some artistic problems do not go away. □

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"The Art of Richard Tuttle" remains on view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art through Oct. 16; travels to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Nov. 10, 2005–Feb. 12, 2006; Des Moines Art Center, IA, Mar. 18–June 11, 2006; Dallas Museum of Art, July 15–Oct. 8, 2006; and other venues.

“Richard Tuttle in Conversation with Chris Martin,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, December 2004 - January 2005, pp. 12–13

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

ART

Richard Tuttle

IN CONVERSATION with Chris Martin

Throughout his impressive forty-year career, Richard Tuttle has pursued an artistic practice that is not easily categorized, incorporating drawing, painting, and sculpture into an idiosyncratic, intensely personal hybrid. With two successive solo installations at The Drawing Center in New York, a new show at The Wolfsonian-Florida International University in Miami, and an upcoming retrospective opening at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in July 2005 and traveling to the Whitney Museum of American Art in the fall, Tuttle's work has become highly visible recently, despite its sometimes miniscule scale. The *Rail* spoke with Tuttle at the Tribeca loft he shares with his wife the poet Mei-mei Berssenbrugge and their daughter, Martha.

Chris Martin (Rail): Richard, how did you become an artist?

Richard Tuttle: Well, I knew before kindergarten, because the first day of kindergarten became the first day of my life. When the teacher passed out paper and a box of crayons, I knew what my life was about.

Rail: Have you kept any of your childhood work?

Tuttle: No. But the first drawing I made in kindergarten I certainly retain in my head. When I had my 1965 show at Betty Parsons Gallery, and I saw my piece across the room called "Hill," I realized that it was the drawing I made in kindergarten. It was just premature.

Rail: Wow. Did you go to art school?

Tuttle: Well, I wanted to go, but my parents didn't approve. But it worked out well—I went to Trinity College in Hartford, and in my sophomore year Sam Wagstaff came as the curator of contemporary art at the Wadsworth Athenaeum. And there were so few people interested in contemporary art there that we just naturally gravitated to one another. I learned more from that discourse, I'm sure, than anyone could have learned in the best art school in America.

Rail: You were lucky to find a mentor.

Tuttle: Yes, immensely. He trained with Richard Offner, a great Renaissance scholar, and so he had all of that right up to the most contemporary thing. He had such an enormous connoisseurship, with access to the most interesting and hippest happenings in the visual arts. He just had a fabulous apartment with just stacks of catalogs and pamphlets everywhere…

Rail: So by the time you came to New York in 1963, you were a pretty sophisticated kid. Were you part of the revolutionary explosion that was happening in the sixties?

Tuttle: Yeah, I mean, all across the country, kids would just lie back one morning and say, "We gotta go to Haight Ashbury." You just heard it—there was something in the side of your brain that connected with the air. Of course Trinity and Hartford was an enormously conservative place, but I did theater sets, was editor of a literary magazine, the yearbook, and all kinds of stuff that were in tune with the sixties' search for ideas. I did the yearbook, and it is in fact the greatest yearbook Trinity has ever had, but at the time the admissions department wrote me a letter and said that I might like to know that my yearbook is the only yearbook they will never show to incoming students (*laughs*). In a sense the shit didn't hit the fan until 1967 and '68. I know that it was a revolutionary period, but I would actually say I am not really a revolutionary, because when the actual revolution happened, I was interested in harmony and finding in the middle of that storm a kind of peace.

Rail: Perhaps you were a revolutionary with a different focus. I mean the work that you made in the late sixties seems to me very radical. But it is perhaps radical in its desire for something deeply personal and intimate. Today we're dealing with our own storm—this terrible war in Iraq. Back in the sixties you were in the middle of the Vietnam war. Did you get drafted?

Tuttle: Yeah, I did. After Trinity I went to Cooper Union because it was free, but I found after one semester that it wasn't really for me. I got this idea that if I was going to have to be in the military, I would like to be a pilot and fly at twice the speed of sound. So I enlisted and passed all the tests. The local draft board sent me a letter saying that I was being drafted. My enlistment officer put me in communications and electronics, which I didn't think was my talent at all, but if it saved me from being drafted, then fine. The whole point of this training was to take your individuality away so you are exactly like everybody else and push the button when they say so. I had this idea to study very hard for a multiple choice test and color in the answer to the left of the correct one. It worked like a charm. They sent me right to the intensive ward of the nuthouse and then gave me an honorable discharge because they thought that it was their fault that I had gone nuts. And still to this day, I don't know if in fact I was nuts. On the other hand, how could you not feel nuts in that situation, if you are a living, thinking, feeling, breathing human being?

Rail: Well, you survived. You didn't go to Vietnam and you ended up in New York.

Tuttle: Which is where I wanted to be, but I had to deal with my father saying you ruined your life and what are we going to tell the relatives? Things like that. But I had a brother and other family members in the war, and they just came back total drug addicts and insane and have never recovered from Vietnam, it was such an unbelievable crime.

Rail: Somehow in the middle of all this you met Agnes Martin. Can you talk about how you met her and what she meant to you as a young artist?

Tuttle: Well, when I enlisted to be a pilot, I thought they would keep me for years. I felt that I had thrown my life away and that actually gave me courage to call Agnes. After I enlisted I went to the streets, and there was a phone booth and she was living near there, and so I just called her up and she invited me by.

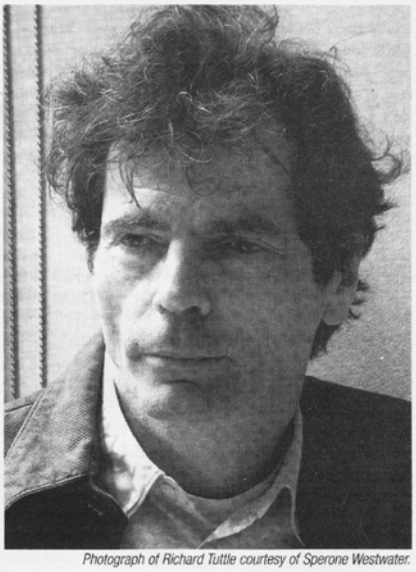
Rail: You called because you knew who she was—you had seen her work?

Tuttle: I called because I had actually seen her and I had had a sort of intuitive response, she had something to say to me about whatever it is I am. So I knew I didn't need my savings, my little bit of savings, so I thought I'd buy art with it. So I went to Agnes and said I would like to buy a drawing. And I looked at drawing after drawing after drawing, and finally the one I found was in the pages of a telephone book where it was being flattened. When I found it I knew that that was the drawing I wanted. As the years go on, it is just a phenomenal drawing. It is really like the first drawing of the true grids, and that is such an enormous step in terms of art. It is incalculable, that if one did try to calculate it, there are so many different points of view in which you can offer a calculation. I think Agnes is truly an artist who is going to take 100 years for the world to catch up to what she is actually doing.

Rail: Was Agnes encouraging of your work?

Tuttle: Sometimes, not always. There was a period, like there was a group of work I made called the tin pieces, and she really didn't go for that at all. But then I remember when I made the first really octagonal cloth piece, and just at that moment Agnes came by and she approved of the piece. That was important; she just thought the others were slipping backwards, which they were.

Rail: Well, how wonderful of her. She was able to give you this clarity and encouragement.



Photograph of Richard Tuttle courtesy of Sperone Westwater.

Tuttle: I think we all see differently, yet being able to see is a gift or a talent that we develop, and there are certainly people who are extremely developed in seeing. But a child can also come along and see as well as somebody who has been training their entire life to see.

Rail: Right—it is not about progress or your credentials but about being open and perceptive in that moment.

Tuttle: Yeah, and the values that emerge from that.

Rail: You've stayed close to Agnes Martin and maintained a dialogue over the years?

Tuttle: Yes. I had Agnes on a drive two days ago. Many people feel bad when people get old and they can't do this or they can't do that. Actually, we go into these higher levels of illumination. We are not leaving; we are gaining, in fact. Agnes was such an extraordinary human being, and to be around her as she is going through to these higher levels of illumination…I just ask her questions. And the nurses there are like, who is this? But her answers, the freshness! One question I asked her was if she thought Picasso was a good artist. And I didn't get an answer because she forgot the question (*laughs*). But the fact that she didn't have an answer is also an answer…I asked Agnes, "Is there a special relation between women and abstraction?" And she said, "Without women, you'll never know what abstraction is." One issue that we talked about is this difference between men and women. I think that men's art is read from left to right and women's art is read from right to left. I faced this any number of times going to art school when I would walk in and try to see what was here. Zero was coming in, and then I would see that this was a woman's art. So I would go up and read it from right to left, and then I would see. So this happened many times. And finally I went to Agnes and asked her about it because she does this type of painting that seems to be non-gender specific, and maybe for that reason she really didn't like the question. After a few moments she said, "My paintings have always been read from right to left." It's fascinating when you actually look at them that way you get this heart-touching delicacy and poignancy. With Agnes's work, that is all played against this other formality, this toughness, this structure. She does make such an effort to make it even all over. Where does that come from? I am reading an essay written by Katherine Tuma, who works at the Drawing Center, who says that Agnes is on record somewhere as saying that when people go to a museum, they have many different emotional responses; they can be happy or angry, but those responses are not connected to the paintings in the museum. And Katherine says, like any logical person would, "Well, if they're not connected to the paintings, what are they connected to?" She made a great litany of all the people who have looked at Agnes's paintings and felt the beauty and all the aesthetic emotional qualities as a kind of

"Richard Tuttle in Conversation with Chris Martin," *The Brooklyn Rail*, December 2004 - January 2005, pp. 12–13

proof that Agnes is not correct in saying that one's response is not connected to the art. I know it is dangerous, but I am kind of for Agnes.

Rail: But Richard, I've had this experience in front of your work where in the act of looking at one of your paintings I can become so absorbed that I'm suddenly deeply alive—like I feel my feet on the floor, feel the air on my neck, and become very alert to the quality of sounds around me…does this make any sense to you? If I'm moved by a painting of yours, don't you think something came through the art and reached me?

Tuttle: I think you describe that very beautifully. But I think I don't know. I am kind of comfortable with not knowing.

Rail: Let me ask you another side of that question. I remember reading that Hilton Kramer review of your 1975 retrospective at the Whitney in which he attacked you so horribly. How have you weathered that kind of hostile or uncomprehending reaction?

Tuttle: It took me almost twenty-five years to deal with that. It was not just Hilton Kramer; there was an entire controversy around the show. I am trying to create harmony and I am also trying to make work that is for everyone. So I had to deal with the fact that it is for some people and not for everyone, which actually is still not true. One of the things I have to say is that our enemies are our mental constructs. As you go out and expose yourself more and more, it breaks down your mental constructs. I had to face this construct that was based on a tremendous fear.

Rail: What was your fear?

Tuttle: It was mixed up with a number of fears. A primal fear, a fear of my father…he had a nervous breakdown, and I think I was not treated very well during that period, and literally as a child I had to reconstruct a world of my own. It is amazing what a child can do.

Rail: Well, when I think of your work from the late sixties and early seventies, I am conscious of how courageous you were. It takes a certain ego to put such naked stuff out there; yet at the same time your works seems to embody a kind of humility and effortlessness. So how do those two things come together for you, this humility and ego?

Tuttle: I am most comfortable when I feel the polarities are conjoined. I like very much this combination where you could simultaneously make the most intelligent thing that could be made and at the same time it would look completely dumb. And between the dumbness and the staggering intelligence, it opens a world. And it isn't about making something and filling the world up. It is about making this space, like this octagonal, and I know it is quite a wild claim to say that it is the only original form made in the twentieth century, which I think is on the intelligent side, but at the same time, on the dumb side, it is just a piece of cloth that you can throw on the ground and has no top or bottom. And I'd say yeah, that art does have a place in the world, and it is to renew the human soul. But I can also say that that is nothing…When I made those octagonal pieces I remember feeling really vulnerable, and the morning of the cloth-octagonal show I went down to look at the river, and it happened to be a January day and it was snowing and there were two big ocean liners lined up at the docks, and I think I had never seen the beauty of nature so overwhelmingly strongly—so much so that I realized that what I had made was just nothing.

Rail: (*laughs*) Yeah, but you made a pretty great nothing! Speaking of the beauty of nature, you spend a lot of time in New Mexico.

Tuttle: We have this other life in New Mexico, in the Southwest, where it is very much about alternative things. I am very interested in this vibrational medicine at the moment. The vibrational model is that we have our bodies, and then the next body is the etheric body, and the next body is the astropheric body…We are actually evolving to higher and higher degrees of subtlety as beings. In my own work, it has allowed me to see what I think is true, that human beings are in fact mostly light. One of the problems in art is to have to guide oneself around certain energies and forces that are not in fact art—they are other things. So the mystic world is certainly one of the worlds that comes close to art sometimes.

Rail: Do you feel that working in New Mexico opens a different sensibility than when you are working in New York?

Tuttle: Yeah. In a way, the juices are stimulated out in the provinces in certain ways, but the critical thing that the city offers is that there are people who gather and who are concerned and can exercise critical powers, which you don't find really out in New Mexico.

Rail: So you bring work from New Mexico to the city and then look at it fresh?

Tuttle: Yeah, but I also felt that you can think of the kind of work that you want to make before you make it. I think in the eighties I began feeling that the base for the work I wanted to make needed to be larger than just one place. At that time I was showing a lot in Europe, so it seemed very desirable to have the work come from one leg in Europe, one in New York, and one in New Mexico.

Rail: So you're open to a variety of working situations and places. Have you stayed involved in the contemporary art world—do you follow younger artists?

Tuttle: Oh, yes—if you can appreciate the work of an artist a generation younger than you are and appreciate it with the same intensity and the same completeness that you can of your own generation, you get art in your life that you never would have had, and you can bring that back into your own confines and improve your work.

Rail: There are people that think of you as the father of a certain kind of intuitive installation work, people like Judy Pfaff, Jessica Stockholder, and Sarah Sze. Are you conscious of your influence on younger artists?

Tuttle: Instead of trying to put one's hopes for immortality in an object, I put my hopes for immortality in inspiring artists, real artists who are younger than I. I know there are certain artists who do not want to leave anything behind and who don't open doors for other artists, and I find that almost criminal and extremely undesirable. The way for me is to open as many doors as I can. You need to get permission. I have certainly gotten permission from older artists in advance, and not just contemporary artists but historical artists. This point about the differences—the more differences one can take in, the better. A lot of times we don't give ourselves permission to know these differences. There is a lot of gender stuff, a lot of garbage, a lot of lies that stand in the way of permission. So if the artist opens those doors and gives the permission, it keeps the culture alive and is ultimately very healthy.

Rail: When I go to a Richard Tuttle show, I never quite know what to expect. Your work has an element of surprise that seems to be pretty consistent. Are there certain techniques that you use to constantly reinvent what you are doing?

Tuttle: Well, I like to think of myself as a very hard worker, but it is very rare and unusual for me to be able to get to do the real stuff. One of the ways I know of that is when it's an occasion where we feel that we didn't make something, that it just came through.

Rail: Do you draw or paint on a daily basis?

Tuttle: Yeah. I was very proud of something Adam Weinberg said once. He said, "When you talk to Richard, you always feel like he's working." I think I actually carry that too far sometimes. I think that there is a certain energy, and I just make something on a day-to-day basis. Then there's the question of whether the work is the rare masterpiece or whether it is the day-to-day thing. And when it comes time to show, you know—what is the work? The quandary is whether to show something that's exceptional or to show that work that you think of as invisible, like invisible daily life…

Rail: Well, the size of your work seems to mirror the invisible intimacy of daily life. Have you ever been tempted to make really large-size pieces?

Tuttle: Well, I guess the issue isn't size; it's scale. And each of us has our scale, which I find also quite remarkable. Early on, part of my thinking was economic because I just said I'll sacrifice, I'll live cheaply, I'll make all the sacrifices I need to as long as I can make my art. And the small size kind of came, out of those parameters, to be connected to my scale. But I actually have an idea at the moment that my scale, which I think is much more important than size, also has a relation to supersize, really, really big stuff. I have been doing some projects that are supersize, and they have been very successful, but that is even more paradoxical because when you get to supersize, people don't know that it becomes invisible.

Rail: What do you mean by supersize—something that takes place over an entire city?

Tuttle: Yeah, I did this show in Spain and Portugal, with two cultures, two languages, two museums. Because one part of Spain—Santiago de Compostella—really wants to be more politically connected to Portugal, some of the structure was about advancing that side while at the same time accepting differences. This is a case of using that country and outdoor situation in the same way I might use a room in some gallery…Right now I am doing a project down in Miami with 137,000 tiles and a 14-story building, and it's millions of dollars, and it involves many different levels and structures that are all part of the project.

Rail: Let me ask you about Betty Parsons. She gave you your first show in New York?

Tuttle: Yeah, she did. It was a gallery with a very particular vision. I don't think most people know how important she was in producing that vision. Betty was completely irrational, but her vision was about the relation between art and the actual development of every part of the human. One time she had this line about me: "Richard is someone who is listening in the corner of the room." I have actually made corner pieces. I think it is a pretty accurate estimation of me.

Rail: How old were you when you had your first show with her?

Tuttle: About 21 or 22. Betty, who had all this experience, said to me she wouldn't think to show an artist under 35 because it takes you that long, at least that long, to find yourself. This was the phrase of the moment, finding yourself.

Rail: She made an exception for you?

Tuttle: Well, there were examples of young people in their early twenties who had showed, like Frank Stella in 1959 with the black paintings. He was in Dorothy Miller's American show very early. Betty had a sense that things were coming to the youth age.

Rail: So now, like forty years later, you have a major retrospective coming up at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Can you talk about that?

Tuttle: Well, after a certain length of involvement, one does have a past. I mean, in preparing this retrospective show, I am being forced to deal very much with past things, which is not normal, really. I think most artists are happy to go forward and think about the future and forget the past…

Rail: I think of some of your important early work as site-specific installations—almost performances. Are you are going to re-perform, as it were?

Tuttle: Yeah, the wire pieces. I actually see those more as performance pieces. One of the questions I ask with those pieces is, how much can you be outside of your own work? The actual steps to make a wire piece are like simple steps. And for somebody watching you, it seems like a wall that you can simultaneously put yourself into and take yourself out of.

Rail: Did you ever perform in front of an audience consciously?

Tuttle: To me, what this is all about and where it comes together is using the body as a critique of technology. I am a pretty shy and discreet person. It would be just out of character to go in front of an audience. But the wire pieces really are performative, and when I make them I really check out. People ask if I mind that they are there, and I don't mind if there are 5,000 people there. I am out. BR

Storr, Robert, “Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

ARTFORUM

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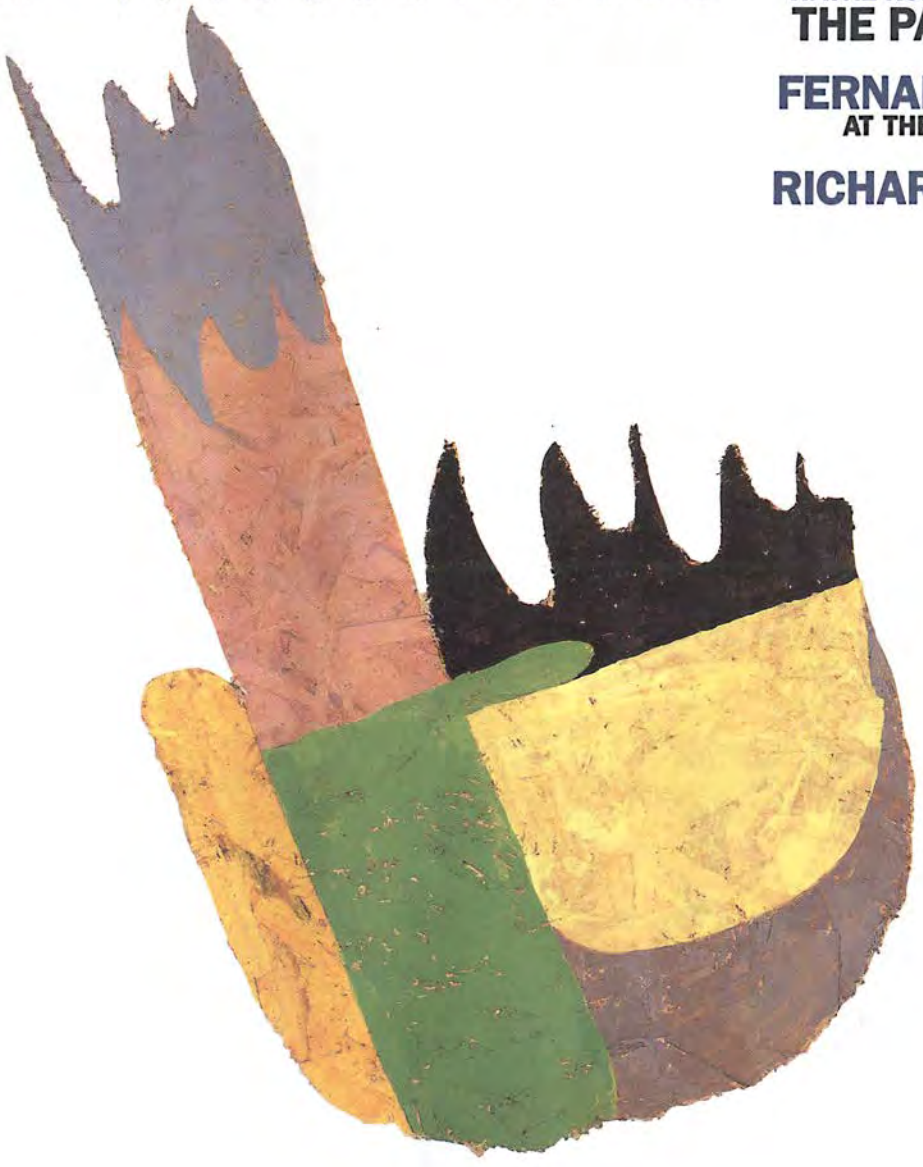
WAYNE KOESTENBAUM ON
THE PAPARAZZI

FERNAND LÉGER
AT THE POMPIDOU

RICHARD TUTTLE



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Storr, Robert, “Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

ROBERT STORR

JUST EXQUISITE?

THE ART OF RICHARD TUTTLE

The ’90s have never really declared themselves. Exceptions noted—Matthew Barney, for example—the best art to emerge in the decade has been physically modest and antirhetorical. That’s reasonable enough, given the grandstanding of the ’80s. In place of massive canvases, reliefs, or bronzes, artists such as Tom Friedman have favored materials like typing paper, masking tape, and bubblegum; instead of

Storr, Robert, "Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle," *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

crisp layouts, press type, Photostats, and various state-of-the-art advertising techniques, Raymond Pettibon has stuck to hand lettering and drawing on dog-eared or otherwise distressed sheets of paper. And despite the sometimes vast scale of his installations, you may find Ilya Kabakov's dystopian worldview succinctly summarized in a single dangling specimen composed of string, wire, and assorted found objects or in a crumpled ball of tissue paper lying inconspicuously on the floor near the baseboard molding of a SoHo gallery with a brief didactic label explaining the inevitability of the object's lowly status.

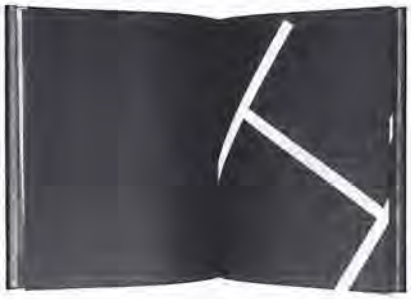
The last piece was part of the New York version of a seminal 1990 exhibition organized by Ralph Rugoff for the Rosamund Felsen Gallery in Los Angeles and retooled in 1992 for an East Coast audience at American Fine Arts in New York. The show's title, "Just Pathetic," has since become the only distinctive '90s art moniker to stick. The new sensibility Rugoff defined offered an X-ray-accurate diagnosis of the period's symptomatic discontents. "Whenever failure to successfully conform can be attributed to a lack of mastery and self-control, to a laughable powerlessness, that behavior is in danger of being labeled pathetic. To be pathetic, in other words, is to be a loser, haplessly falling short of the idealized norm. Art which embraces the pathetic voluntarily wallows in this embarrassing territory. While all art risks failing, pathetic art makes failure its medium."

Though theory-ready types immediately jumped on Rugoff's idea to claim it in the name of the "abject," Georges Bataille, and still fancier discourses, what they missed entirely was Rugoff's tone. And when it comes to pegging the zeitgeist, tone is everything. Whether American adolescent fears and obsessions (as in the work of Pettibon or Mike Kelley) or simply a hostility to the grand manner (as is true for Kabakov and David Hammons) was more at issue in the show, the point is that all these artists turned their back on high style and the career strategies that go along with it.

THE CONNECTION MARCIA TUCKER PERCEIVED BETWEEN "AMBITIOUS" ART AND AMBITIOUSLY "UNAMBITIOUS" ART LINKS TUTTLE OF 1975 TO CONTEMPORARY ANTIHEROIC TENDENCIES.

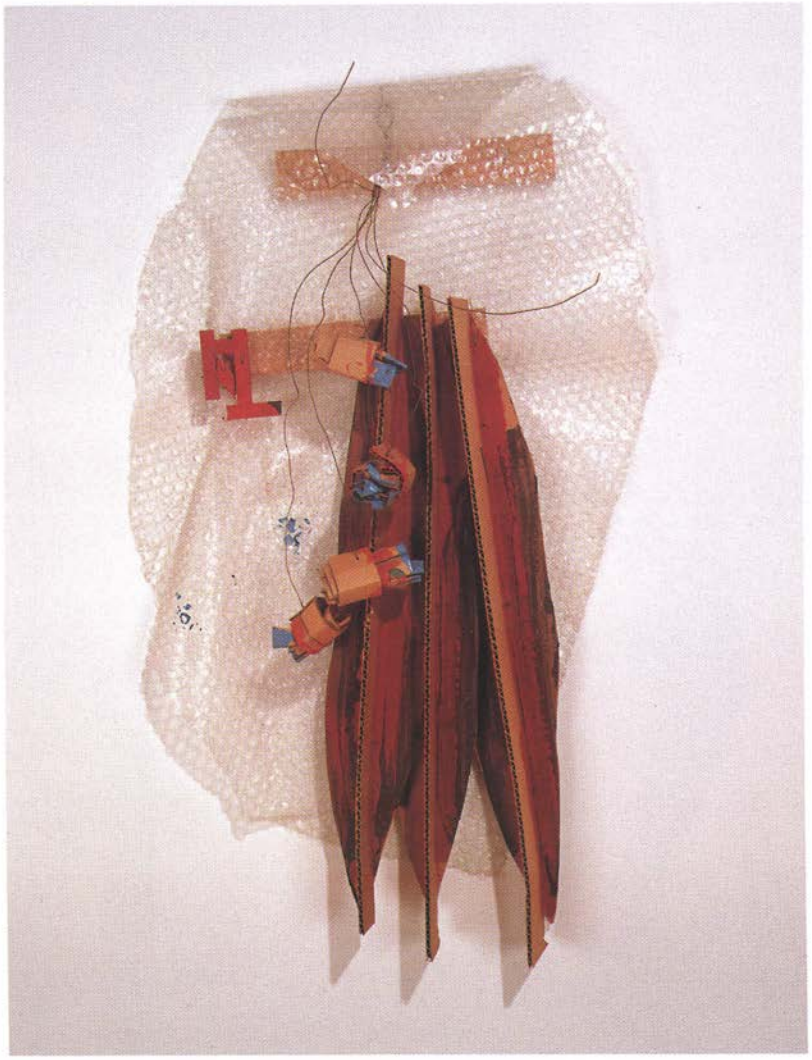
Which brings me, in a roundabout way, to Richard Tuttle, the subject of two shows in New York last year. A miniretrospective at the New York Public Library, a corridor-filling gem coorganized by Robert Rainwater, chief librarian for art, prints, and photographs, and freelance curator Robert Murdoch, featured almost fifty examples of the artist's books, prints, and multiples from 1965 through 1995. Meanwhile, a show at Sperone Westwater presented new paintings on jigsaw-cut wafer board in addition to ten "classic" Tuttles spanning roughly the same period as the library show. Among them were a beautiful glyphlike shaped wood relief from 1965, another letter-form dyed canvas hanging from 1967, an octagonal paper piece almost imperceptibly adhered to the wall with wheat paste from 1970, and a small, ankle-high, wall-hugging plywood slat, painted white along one edge, from 1974.

Having shown quietly in galleries starting in the mid '60s, Tuttle was first introduced to the general public in 1975 in a one-person exhibition at the Whitney Museum organized by Marcia Tucker. The radical unobtrusiveness of the work triggered shock waves that eventually resulted in Tucker's departure from the Whitney and her founding of the New Museum of Contemporary Art. As always, Hilton Kramer was on hand to sound the tocsin for those perennially antagonistic to fresh ideas. "To Mies van der Rohe's



Top to bottom: **Richard Tuttle, *Cloth Piece (Pale Orange "M")*, 1967,** dyed canvas, 38 ½ x 40". **Richard Tuttle, *Two Books*, 1969,** book in two volumes; vol. 1: ten leaves with ten screen-prints in white on black paper, vol. 2: thirty leaves with deconstructed square shape successively screen-printed in black, in black outline, and as a cutout on white paper; vol. 1: 12 ⅛ x 9 ¾", vol. 2: 12 ⅛ x 9 ¾". Printed by B. Wery, Cologne, Germany. Fifty copies for the artist, in addition to edition of two hundred. **Richard Tuttle, *Story With Seven Characters*, 1965,** book with eight woodcuts; binding: black paper over boards, edged with black tape; 12 ⅛ x 11 ¼". Printed, bound, and published by Richard Tuttle. Edition of seven.

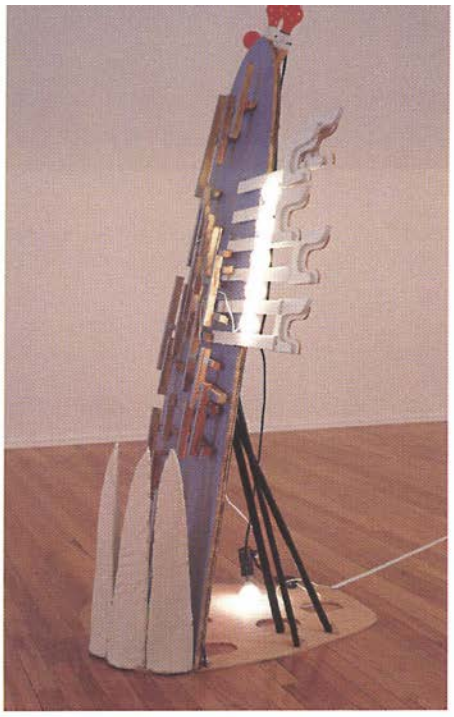
Storr, Robert, “Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

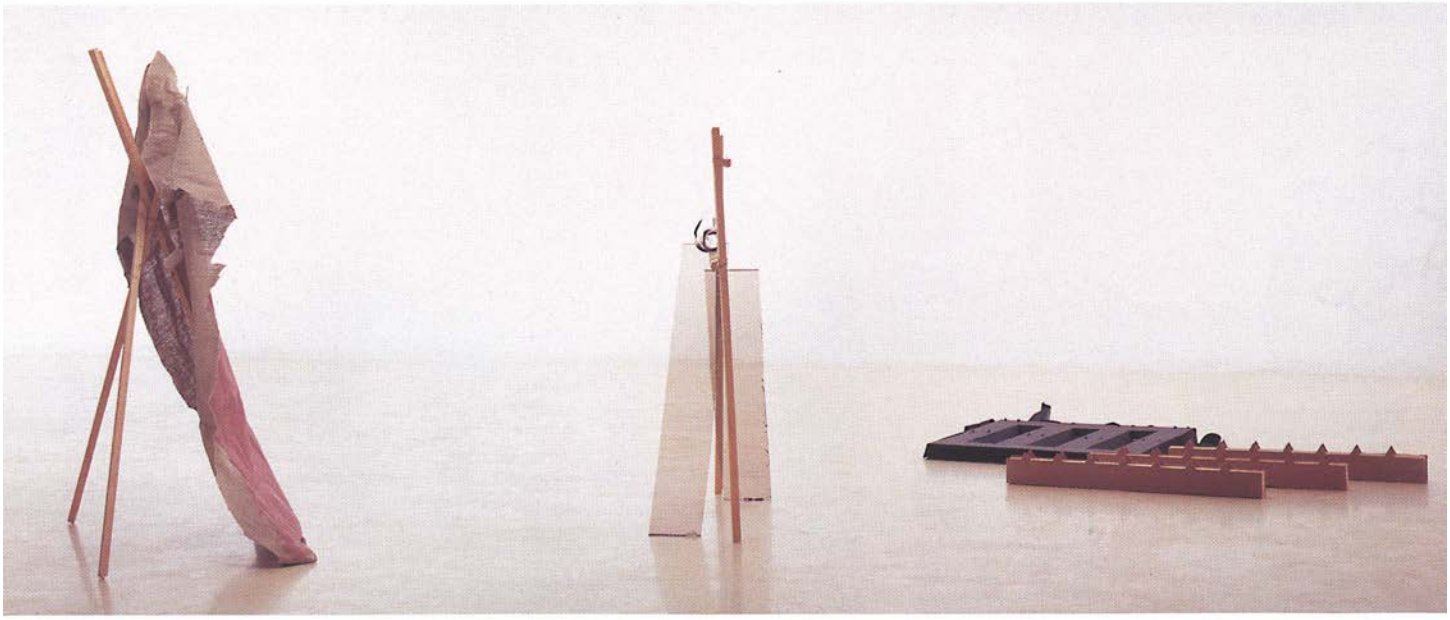


Clockwise from top left: **Richard Tuttle, *Line Piece 84*, 1992,** acrylic and graphite on paper, graphite, 2 ½ x 3 ½". **Richard Tuttle, *Two or More*, 1984,** bubble wrap, wood, staples, corrugated cardboard, paint, and wire, 30 ¼ x 18 ½ x 6". **Richard Tuttle, *Line Piece 82*, 1992,** watercolor on paper, graphite, 3 x 3".

Storr, Robert, “Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

Clockwise from top left: **Richard Tuttle, *Sentences II*, 1989,** wood, natural pigments, enamel paint, canvas, metal with ceramic light fixtures, 21 ½ x 56 x 32". **Richard Tuttle, *Sentences III*, 1989,** acrylic paint, wood, ceramic light fixtures, and natural canvas, 72 x 42 x 35". **Richard Tuttle, *Turquoise III*, 1988,** wood, canvas, acrylic paint, cardboard, Plexiglas, Styrofoam, fabric, and ribbon, 114 ⅜ x 98 ½ x 53 ½".





Storr, Robert, "Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle," *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

famous dictum that less is more, the art of Richard Tuttle offers definitive refutation. For in Mr. Tuttle's work, less is unmistakably less. It is, indeed, remorselessly and irredeemably less. It establishes new standards of lessness, and fairly basks in the void of lessness. One is tempted to say that, so far as art is concerned, less has never been less than this." In the event, Kramer's pan was included in a selection of criticism Tucker included in the show's catalogue (published after the opening). And as is usually the case, Kramer accurately signaled the importance of the occasion by denying it had any.[1]

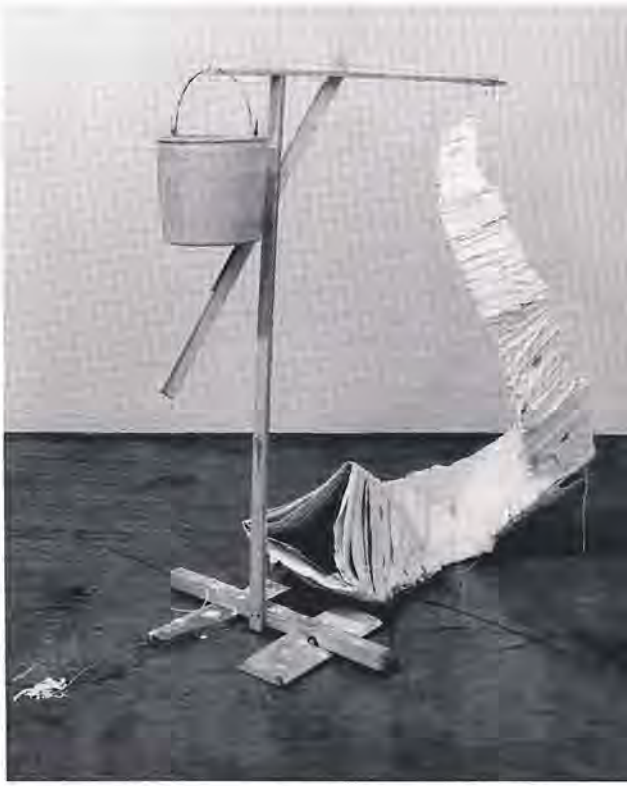
Prepared by Kramer's onslaught and buttressed by the better-informed and more sympathetic commentaries of John Perrault, Thomas Hess, and Lawrence Alloway, among others, Tucker chose to emphasize the provocative slightness of the artist's output. "The work of Richard Tuttle often shocks viewers with its offhandedness, its modest informality and its rough, impermanent look," she wrote. "Tuttle's pieces are insistent; their often small size, visual frailty and blatant disregard for the kind of technical refinement found in 'major' art stubbornly, even perversely command attention. These pieces are so removed from the attitudes and modes of working found in the art of most of Tuttle's peers that their individuality alone constitutes, for many viewers, an offense in itself."

Nowhere is the word "pathetic" used in the critical debate surrounding the Whitney show, but the connection Tucker and others perceived between "ambitious" art and ambitiously "unambitious" art links Tuttle of 1975 to contemporary antiheroic tendencies. And it positions him as an aesthetic "elder" in many ways comparable to Bruce Nauman, whose polymorphous assaults on mandarin style and sentiment have had so profound an effect on recent practice. Nauman's analytic anger resonates with that of Pettibon, Kelley, and their soul mates, while Tuttle's idiosyncratic finesse is echoed by that of Friedman, with whom he also shares a temperamental serenity, and, at times, by that of Hammons and Kabakov.

BY MEANS OF HIS MATERIALS, TUTTLE HAS GONE ABOUT ELABORATING THE ABSOLUTE "LESSNESS" OF HIS EARLY WORK TO THE POINT OF QUIRKY EXCESS.

Whether its materials consist of bottle caps nailed in the thousands to telephone poles, fried chicken wings ornamentally attached to cast-off carpeting, or cigarette butts impaled on bent coat hangers like candles set into a sconce, Hammons' work is as ingeniously decorative as it is socially rooted. In much the same way, messiness was never so artful as it is in Kabakov's ghostly still-lifes of communal kitchens and squalid Soviet SROs. Karen Kilimnik's hodgepodge tableaux and scatter pieces mix deftness and dilapidation in ways not unrelated to Kabakov's—the cultural wasteland she commemorates occupied the opposite side of the iron curtain from the one he now re-creates. And, with their dynamic shape-shifting and sometimes Al Held–like grandiosity, Jessica Stockholder's jazzy interiors, facades, and junk-shop amalgams represent the upbeat contingent of the loose, and much larger, aesthetic community currently encamped in Tuttle's vicinity.

A generational chasm separates Tuttle from his '90s counterparts, however, not to mention a profound philosophical difference. A voluble as well as reflective man, Tuttle is devoted to ideas but seemingly untempted by systems building. A basically intuitive intellectual, he has not been disappointed by Modernism, as so many younger artists have, because art's compromising entanglements with the world have never been as interesting to him as its mutating genetic codes, according to which the simple chromosomes



Richard Tuttle, *There's No Reason a Good Man Is Hard to Find III*, 1988, chicken wire, wire, wood, plaster, fabric, spray paint, plastic bucket, and cement, 53 ¼ x 45 x 30".

Storr, Robert, “Just Exquisite? The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, November 1997, pp. cover, 87-93

of his early work have mutated into wondrous organisms of recent years.

At heart, Tuttle is the lyric poet of the ephemeral. Books consume a large part of his energy, both as a reader and as a maker. (Pettibon is literate in similar measure.) A considerable number of those on display at the public library were catalogues for exhibitions; like the late Martin Kippenberger and Joseph Beuys before him, Tuttle has frequently acted as his own curator while assuming the prerogatives of the professional designer of posters and documentation for his art. Meanwhile, among the living, Tuttle's literary collaborators have included Larry Fagin, Barbara Guest, and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge (a poet he met in connection with a project sponsored by the Whitney Museum and later married); among the dead they count Auden, Yeats, Descartes, Spinoza, and Beuys.

The elegance of Tuttle's volumes—which often enough appear to have no volume whatsoever—is consistent with that of his drawings. Indeed, Tuttle treats typography, layout, and the various printing processes he employs as if he were making a drawing. The paper textures, tones, shapes, and edges, and the etched or lithographed embellishments he superimposes on them, are like the washes of his watercolors, as is his frequent use of pale, aqueous hues in these works. In much the same way, Tuttle's organic emblems may on occasion recall the "astral" signs of Theosophist Charles Webster Leadbeater and Annie Besant or the displaced symbols and hermetic patterns of Beuys, yet there's no hocus-pocus attached to his delicate icons and atmospheres. If anything Tuttle's work sounds a sympathetic chord with that of Blinky Palermo, who eschewed the symbolism of his teacher Beuys for an American-style abstraction in a deliberately minor key.

More attuned to pictorial than sculptural modes, Tuttle's mission seems to be to show that American-type painting could continue to emit its aura without the muscular statement or grand scale with which it is historically or mythically linked. Tuttle's slackening of gesture, softening of form, and objectification of fragility may be seen as relative to existing archetypes in the canon of postwar Modernism following Abstract Expressionism. Ellsworth Kelly, like Tuttle a former member of the Betty Parsons stable, hovers near the latter's shaped wooden paintings of 1965 and dyed cloth works of 1967, just as Kelly's abstract linear drawings of the '50s and early '60s—for example, *One Stroke*, 1962—foreshadow Tuttle's wire pieces of 1972. Alfred Jensen occupies a place in the vicinity of Tuttle's patterned insignias and rainbow scales of color. While Tuttle takes the starch out of Kelly, he takes the bulk out of Jensen. Meanwhile, Tuttle's affinity with Tony Smith, reinforced by his having worked on the fabrication of some of the late artist's large-scale sculptures, encompasses Smith's interest in the synthesis of organic and geometric form.

Tuttle's taste for contemporary materials locates him squarely in his own generation. To heavy-metal and building-block Minimalism, however, he has responded with lightweight synthetics: Styrofoam, acoustic ceiling tiles, Zip-lock baggies, cardboard packing of every description, corrugated paper, foils, wire mesh. Tuttle's palette is made up of the things you find at the bottom of an office drawer, on the floor of a Garment District sweatshop, or in the tins atop an amateur carpenter's table. Organic shapes are thus cut from or pieced together out of inorganic scraps of synthetic this and mass-produced that. Glue is another signature material, a vital ingredient in the studied messiness that first surfaced in a 1983 exhibition of Tuttle's reliefs at Blum Helman. He used glue as only a once-upon-a-time boy in this country could, with wispy, light-catching filaments dan-

Left to right: **Blinky Palermo, *Tagtraum II (Nachtstück)* [Daydream II (Nightpiece)], 1966,** wood, canvas, and oil, ca. 60 ⅜ x 43 ¼ x 1 ½". **Ellsworth Kelly, *Lemon Branch*, 1964,** pencil on paper, 28 ½ x 22 ½".

Clockwise from upper right: **Karen Kilimnik, *Castle Gloom*, 1991,** fabric, paper, cardboard cartons, candles, iron candle stand, custom jewelry, photocopies, dried flowers, plastic miniature dogs, and cat collar, 75 x 92 x 55". Installation view. **Jessica Stockholder, 1996,** acrylic paint, oil paint on glass, wooden shingles, wire mesh, green wire, hardware, acrylic yarn, scarf, thread, and silicone caulking, 71 x 48 x 29". Installation view. Photo: Cathy Carver. **Tom Friedman, *Untitled*, 1990,** two sheets of paper, each 11 x 8 ½". **David Hammons, *Highfalutin*, 1990,** crystal candelabra, metal window frame, glass, wire, and rubber, dimensions variable. Installation view.

gling from the joined parts like the excess that oozes from the sutures of a plastic airplane assembled by an eager twelve-year-old. Tuttle has contributed to the long history of modern collage by subtly emphasizing the "*colle*" and, more broadly, the tenuousness of the bonds between sticky, stapled, stitched, or delicately placed but unattached parts.

By means of his ever-expanding list of raw or semiraw materials, Tuttle has gone about elaborating the absolute "lessness" of his early work to the point of quirky excess. Tuttle of the '60s and '70s evolved into Tuttle of the '80s and '90s in a manner parallel to the epochal shift from minimal to maximal art, but he never broke character. To the Baroque histrionics of neo-Expressionism, Tuttle answered with sometimes extravagant Rococo refinement. The work may be diminutive and emblematic, as in the tiny wall pieces he showed in Baden-Baden, flat-out-pictorial, as in the often lush acrylic and wafer-board paintings featured in his gallery show last fall and at the Venice Biennale this past summer, or nearly—but never quite—space devouring, as in his *Floor Drawings* of 1987–89, rambling mixed-media assemblages that look like pup tents, miniature-golf traps, or carnival concessions on a sunny morning after a windy night. (The decorative light bulbs found in some of these pieces correspond closely to Hammons' use of them in *Highfalutin*, 1985–90, and related pieces.) Tuttle's paradigms are roadside USA; his touch is epicurean. Rare is the American who can take his pleasure so guiltlessly or offer it with so few strings attached; in his art, those strings may dangle from the actual work.

To call Tuttle's work "precious"—a habitual cocktail-party and art-academy epithet—is to beg all the interesting questions. To make things simultaneously ephemeral and jewellike is to pit impermanence against permanence, everyday temporality against aesthetic timelessness. Japanese art of the high courtly tradition repeatedly did so; artists of the Rococo period celebrated the fleeting delights of their doomed aristocratic world in a related spirit. Tuttle's work is more improvisatory than its Japanese analogues and less melancholic or overtly frivolous than its seventeenth-century European ones. But he too is engaged in the serious business of making the most of things with the least exalted claim on our attention and the unlikeliest chances of long-term survival. In which case the prime emotion stirred in the viewer by Tuttle's elegant confections—beyond instinctive covetousness and despite puritanical suspicion—is vulnerability.

TO CALL TUTTLE'S WORK "PRECIOUS"—A HABITUAL COCKTAIL-PARTY AND ART-ACADEMY EPITHET—IS TO BEG ALL THE INTERESTING QUESTIONS.

Doubling back to the beginning, then, one can recognize in the damage-prone things that Richard Tuttle reveals to be "just exquisite" the favored twins of already-damaged things Ralph Rugoff finds "just pathetic." But where Rugoff's critical stance concerns the aesthetics of heightened lowliness and the liberating experience of zero expectations, Tuttle's low-grade materials are rendered highly sensuous, his disregard for summary statements bordering on the ecstatic. Coming from different places—and heading in different directions—Tuttle the undeterred romantic and his disabused '90s brethren meet at a juncture where the only truly hopeless propositions seem to be those straining for heroic impact. Their shared renunciation of this option lends the resulting work varying degrees of bittersweetness. While the conceptually astringent flavor of much "pathetic" art is individually seasoned with sentiment—Kabakov's nostalgia, Pettibon's "film-noir" homages, Hammons' visual blues riffs—Tuttle's work is sweet with *continued on page 130*

Clockwise from top left: **Richard Tuttle, *Gold and Silver on Easy Pieces No. 8*, 1996,** wood 29½ x 24", long aluminum cone 8¼", white rope 45¼", wood, wire, and rope 14⅜ x 3¾". Six elements. **Richard Tuttle, *Gold and Silver on Easy Pieces No. 18*, 1996,** metal 30⅜ x 2¾", black metal cone 14⅜ x 2¾", painted bundle of branches, paper bag with rolled and tied pullover 17 15/16 x 9 15/16 x 5¾". Four elements. **Richard Tuttle, *Waferboard 5*, 1996,** acrylic on wafer board, 16 x 48".

Smith, Roberta, “Review,” *Artforum*, January 1976, pp. 60–61

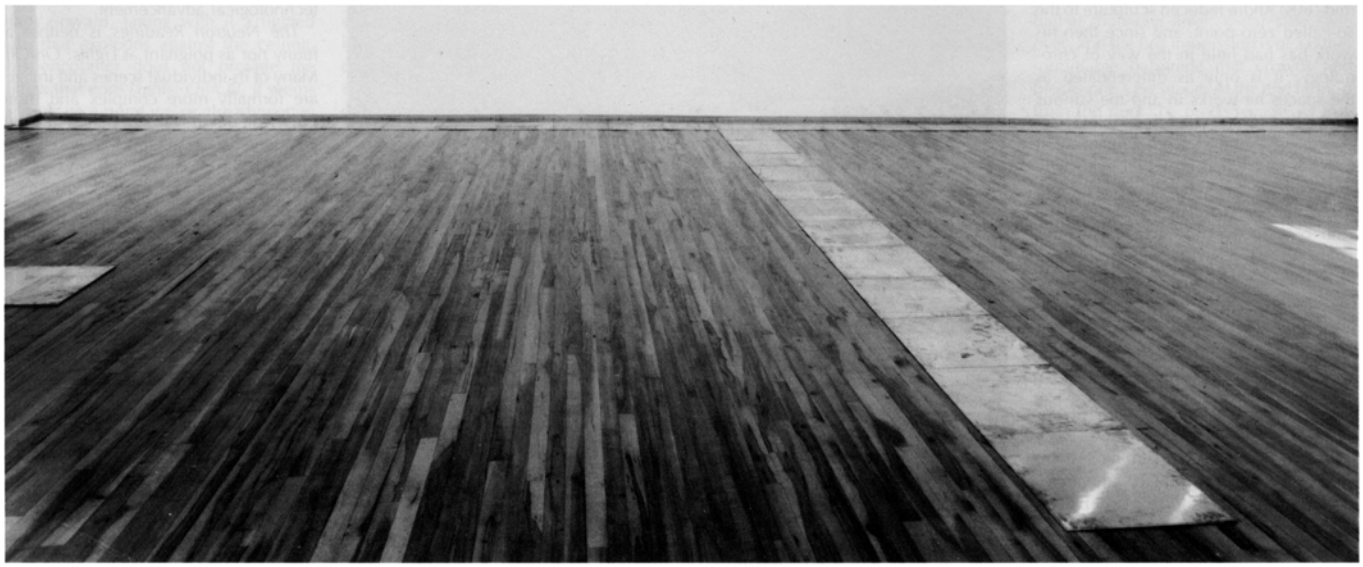
ARTFORUM

RICHARD TUTTLE, Whitney Museum of American Art; CARL ANDRE, Sperone Westwater Fischer Gallery; JARED BARK, Idea Warehouse; FRANCES BARTH, Susan Caldwell Gallery:

The architecture of the Whitney Museum and the art of RICHARD TUTTLE make strange bedfellows. This essential fact remains, regardless of what else (good and mostly bad) has been said about his exhibition there. Ten years of Tuttle's work, presented as "a major examination" (not a retrospective, but major nonetheless), were seen in a series of three installations designed, it was stated, to expose much work, yet allow each piece the large quantity of space it required. There were about 25 pieces on view at a time. About ten of these formed the core of the exhibition and were visible, although in different places, during all three parts. Pieces were shifted from wall to wall, from floor to wall, wall to floor, and many were re-created on the spot. In her statement accompanying the exhibition, Marcia Tucker writes, "Tuttle has often said that given a specific space, there may be only one work which seems 'right' for it," and she goes on to note that his work is "dependent upon the space in which it is installed or executed."

A sense of this "rightness" never comes across in this exhibition, and the rotating installations don't help matters; it seems that most of these pieces can go just about anywhere. Unfortunately, the "dependency" upon space is all too apparent and brings up a contradictory conclusion: the work *cannot* go just about anywhere, in fact there is almost nowhere that it looks "right." Tuttle's work doesn't require a lot of space as much as it requires a special space; his art is intimate and fragile—it always looks fine in Betty Parsons' small, white sanctum. The Whitney is not Tuttle's special kind of space, although it has its own overbearing intimacy of varied and aggressive textures and patterns, as if all those rough walls, floors and ponderous overhead cement grids should orient us tactilely within its otherwise cavernous, scaleless volumes. Even Tuttle's best work tends to get lost in the Whitney, because although it can enhance and be enhanced by the atmosphere of a space with its own kind of totality (his exhibition of white paper octagons at the also-white Clocktower is another successful example), it cannot convincingly create the proper atmosphere if it does not already exist, and Tuttle's work is more about atmosphere than experiential space.

The "core" of the exhibition included a number of painted wood shapes from Tuttle's first show in 1965, a work consisting of 26 smaller, related shapes in galvanized iron from 1967 and a number of colored canvas shapes from 1967–68, for which he is probably best known. The flat painted wood pieces, with their strange, whimsical shapes, strong monochromes and thick edges, withstood the Whitney with the greatest success. They also seem to sum up Tuttle's sensibility: his attraction to an irregular, mysteriously naturalistic geometry (some of these shapes could be out of Arthur Dove), a sensitivity for line and for the edges of things, the quirky combination of the pictorial and the sculptural, all clarified by monochrome color and an honest, if restrained, materiality. These qualities are also prominent in the irregular canvas shapes, as well as the more recent "wood slat" pieces seen at Parsons in 1974: vertical sections of plywood centered on a wall at its juncture with the floor which made the entire wall act as a ground for the shapes. Tuttle achieved his most



Carl Andre, *25 Copper Triode*, 1975, copper, each plate 19¾" square.

attenuated delicacy and greatest formal irony in the wire pieces from 1971–72, which consisted of lengths of wire, a drawn pencil line and the wire's cast shadows.

In many of Tuttle's other series he is isolating too completely the various aspects of an art that is already simple, that lacks the fullness to be worked over so thoroughly. But at the Whitney it is hard to see that the wire and the "wood slat" pieces are significantly better than Tuttle's other series since 1970. Some of these are pretentiously inconsequential: the *Houston Works*, infinitesimal cardboard dots at the center of a wall; the equally indiscernible rope pieces, three inches of rope held to the wall by nails: the funkier *Summer Wood Pieces;* the uncharacteristically bright, slick *Paintings for the Wall* (some of which could easily have been the logo for an oil company or a television network); and least of all, *10 Kinds of Memory and Memory Itself*, pieces of plain white string grouped in various configurations on the floor. It's not all the Whitney's fault.

Like a number of artists born c. 1940 and who started showing after 1965, Tuttle works with a more clearly emotional, maybe even mystical, approach to abstraction than artists, somewhat older, who emerged 1960–65. While artists like Flavin, Judd and Stella seem concerned with what is literally there, Tuttle, in particular, becomes more and more involved with what is "there" by implication only. In Tuttle's case it is casual and unconvincing; it seems that any little scrap that falls into his hands will be transformed magically, poetically into art.

The only process is that of isolation, of placing it in the proper atmosphere, much as one would place a revered object on an altar. This is a nostalgic notion of reduction; it characterizes Tuttle's most ephemeral series, which make him look like the Rod McKuen of post-Minimalism. When Tuttle's work gets extremely slight, as it does too often, it is not experienced emotionally or perceptually; it becomes conceptual and academic. While an artist like Robert Irwin forces us to experience pure space by eliminating a focal point, Tuttle simply makes the focal point all the more important by making it hard to find; his casualness reverts back to a traditional, centered preciousness.

This show could have been smaller, more carefully selected and more impressive. It provides new information about Tuttle, and that information is damaging; in showing the best and the worst, it is a genuine "examination."

CARL ANDRE's new work comes out of the *Cardinal* series (the beginnings of which were exhibited at the John Weber gallery in 1972) and out of pieces which appropriate, rather completely, the entire space of a room (as did work shown here early in Andre's career, and work shown since then in LA, at the old Dwan Gallery and Ace Gallery, and in Europe). The new pieces are called *Triodes*, a word that Andre derived from the combination of the Greek words *tri* and *hodos* (meaning "three" and "path" or "way" respectively). The *Triodes* are like the *Cardinals* in that they project from the base of a wall out into a room; their numerical make-up is also emphasized, as is the reflection of the metal (here copper) onto the wall, something even more obvious in the *Deck* series of 1974 than in the *Cardinals*.

However, unlike either, the *Triodes* also extend along the base of the wall, so their reflections are greater and their command of space is considerably expanded. The *Triodes* consist of copper plates one-half meter square (c. 20") placed in a T-formation along a wall and out into the room. The three extensions from the center plate are all of equal length. Thus the *9 Copper Triode* is 13 copper plates: nine along the wall and four out into the room. Or, if you look at it another way: four plates on three axes out from one center plate. The projection into the room represents half of what is along the wall and the freedom of the shorter row balances the longer but confined one.

These single rows of plates form paths around and through the space of the rooms; they measure and contain it, and the empty floor ceases to be negative space as it is in some of Andre's other work. Previously Andre's solid squares of plates established rather finite, static zones within a room, while his more linear pieces (*Lever* and the *Deck* series are examples), which could often not be walked on, simply cut through and divided space, necessitating movement parallel to them. The *Triodes* operate in both ways: the copper and the floor itself become static zones we can occupy, while the copper plates also compel us to move along them, up to and alongside the wall. The reflection of the copper on the wall gives Andre's work certain pictorial qualities, as Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe pointed out in his discussion of the *Deck* series (*Artforum*, June, 1974), and the thicker plates of the *Triodes* place this pictoriality in clearer, more interesting conflict with its material source. Andre, like Judd, seems more inclined to accept the ability of certain metals to contain and reflect light and depth, along with their more obdurate material qualities. And now Andre takes a similar attitude to the wall—since the reflections imply a mirroring, a continuation of the piece onto and into the surface of the wall.

In this particular installation, the copper plates along the wall invariably match its length as nearly as possible; this is not a requirement, but it should be. A particular balance between the size of the room and that of the piece is crucial. The two pieces which each had a room to themselves worked better than the four pieces in the large gallery. The small pieces, like *3 Copper Triode*, seemed just plain stubby.

While this show seemed better than Andre's two previous ones, it contains no surprises, although the continued strength is something of a surprise. In the

Pincus-Witten, Robert, “The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, February 1970, pp. cover, 62-67

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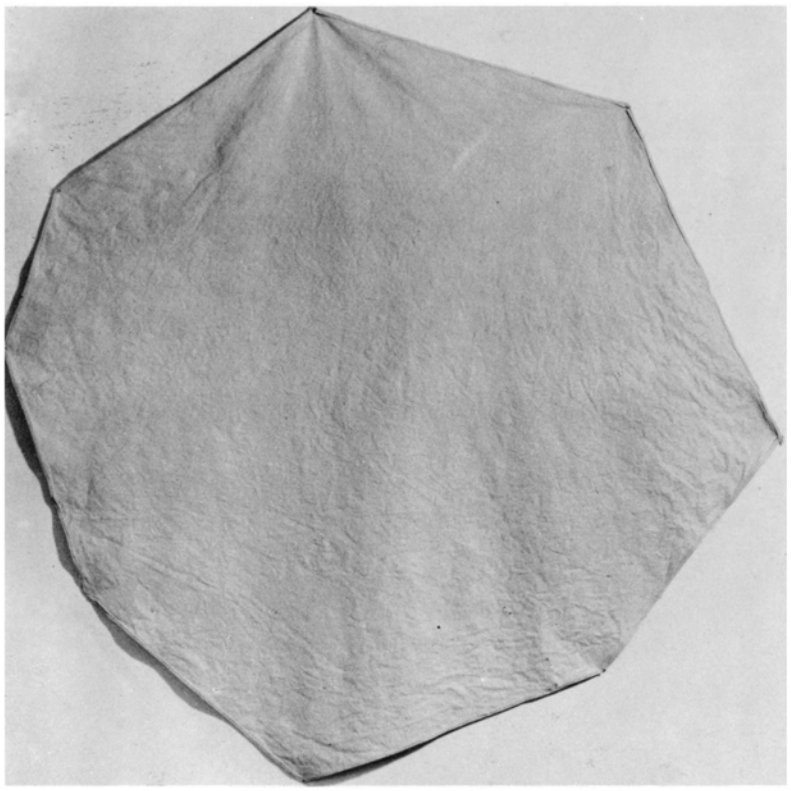
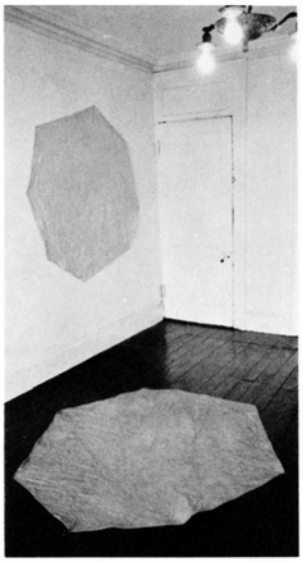
THE ART OF RICHARD TUTTLE



Richard Tuttle, *Canvas*, ca. 54" dia. Betty Parsons Gallery.



Richard Tuttle, *Octagons*, studio view.

ROBERT PINCUS-WITTEN

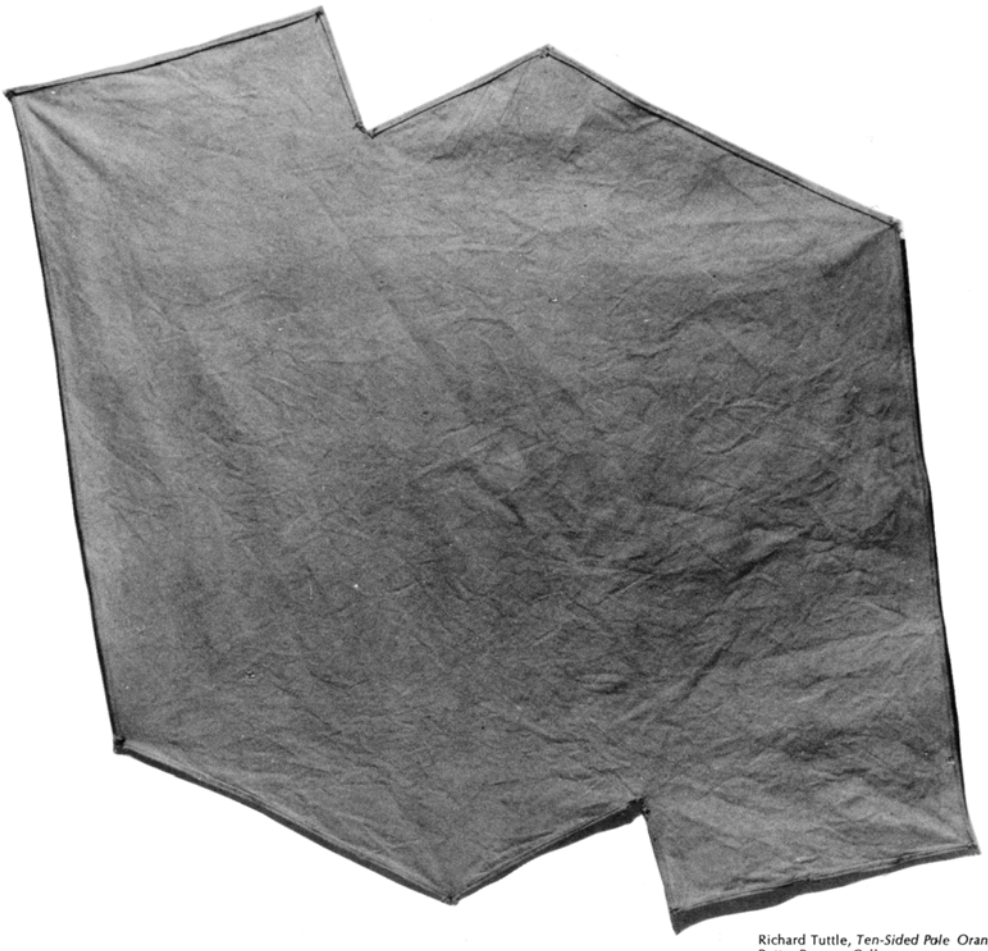
In 1967 Richard Tuttle dyed a group of irregularly shaped and hemmed canvas octagons in various pots of Tintex. Shortly thereafter, when they had dried and had been hand smoothed, they were limply pinned to the wall or laid upon the floor. It did not matter much in which way they were hung or where on the floor they were spread. (Exhibition photographs taken of the works are inscribed on the back "to be held any way.") The issue at hand was not primarily about figure/ground relationships (a further extenuation of Jean Arp's collages "arranged according to the laws of chance,") nor were Tuttle's octagons simply still more artifacts in a long line of Dada-inspired work, although their roots in Dada, and in Arp particularly, cannot be denied.

Serious criticism attempted to locate Tuttle among those artists interested in confounding divisions between sculpture and painting. He was thought of as fusing painting and sculpture into a new polymorph in which sheer tangibility and blunt materiality alluded to sculpture while the character of soaked-in-paint bespoke painting. Some writers assumed that Tuttle derived from an aspect of field painting as it was then known in the work of Frankenthaler, Louis, Noland and Olitski.

One critic, Emily Wasserman, attempted more. In addition to recognizing Tuttle's relationship to field painting, she also referred to an evolution out of the artist's earlier wooden reliefs and indicated in which way Tuttle's peculiar hermetism —"withdrawn" she said—differed from other equally oblique and factual artists, in particular Brice Marden, David Novros, Don Judd and Carl Andre. In Tuttle's work she observed ". . . a concern for the sensuous and for a kind of chromatic fantasy . . . which are levelly denied by the work and thinking of his colleagues."[1]

For my part, I prefer to regard Tuttle's work in terms of its own organic evolution and the artist's personal experiences. Tuttle was born in Rahway, New Jersey, in 1941. His paternal line traces American roots to the early 17th century. The Tuttles had come here to be small landowners and originally cultivated farms near where Trinity Church now stands. Some Tuttles prospered. Others, like the artist's branch, did not. Richard Tuttle grew up in Roselle, New Jersey, "a rather poor town," the second son of four children. He went to Roselle High, part of a class that was unusual only because it was "brighter than most." The family was conservative. His grandmother, on his father's side, set a family tone of fundamentalist Presbyterianism. The artist's grandfather was "something of a dilettante who wrote,

Pincus-Witten, Robert, “The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, February 1970, pp. cover, 62-67

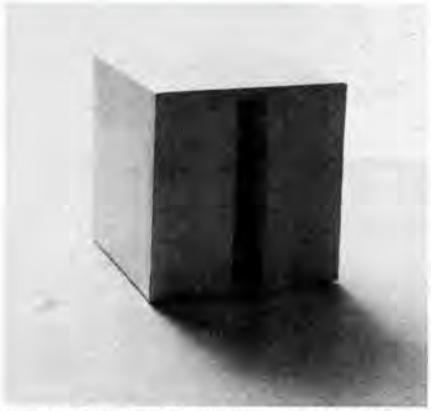


Richard Tuttle, *Ten-Sided Pale Orange Canvas*, 47½ x 62½", 1967.
Betty Parsons Gallery.

63 Richard Tuttle, *First Green Octagon*, dyed canvas, 1967.

Pincus-Witten, Robert, “The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, February 1970, pp. cover, 62-67

Richard Tuttle, untitled, 1968.



Richard Tuttle, Box (paper), 3" cube, 1964. Betty Parsons Gallery.

hand." The paper cubes stressed issues of incision, slotting, folding and cutting—of constructing—but with an oddly infant-like thrust to them quite different from the small, colored celluloid cubes of Lucas Samaras, which were shown during the same period at the now defunct Green Gallery. The 1965 wooden reliefs continued to explore these issues but exaggerated their consciously infantile quotient. The constructions were hollow, perhaps two inches thick. The reliefs were essentially ideograms of landscape or nature, treated in slightly amorphous contours and painted in single colors. They were supported by a nail which entered the work through a small hole in the back. The natural shorthand of the shapes—*Hill*, *Torso*, *Water*, *Fire*—were painted the blunt coloristic equivalent of the sense of the piece. *Water* was blue, *Fire* red, *Hill* grey and so on. In addition to their Arp-like qualities, the pieces also resembled the elements of a child's fitted jigsaw puzzle—large, squat, simplified shapes. The pieces were exhibited at the Betty Parsons Gallery in September, 1965 and several of the works were laid directly on the floor, the most extreme option open to contemporary sculpture working against the tradition of the vertical monolith.

Of the motifs, perhaps *Hill* is the most important. It describes a single, rainbow-like arc on the wall. A drawing of 1963, *Elephant*, nervously redepicts the arc of a vast and possibly protective elephantine mound or hump. This work is still drawn in terms of the delicate Trinity wood blocks, although its ritualizing "feel" is quite new in Tuttle's work.

The relationship of the 1965 ideogrammatic reliefs to the immensely important sculptural attitudes that were emerging in the 1960s is, of course, of greater moment. Constructivist practice—the attitude whereby the method of affixing element to element takes precedence over all other considerations in the execution of a work—first arose in Picasso's Synthetic Cubist assemblages of still-life material in 1913-1914. The intellectual artists of the Russian Revolution elevated this attitude into a style which came to be known as Constructivism. However remarkable the accruings possible to carving and modeling, Constructivist practice made evident the unmodernity of these earlier sculptural attitudes. It was not until the late '50s and early '60s that a viable alternative to Constructivism came into being, without, it is evident, supplanting it. It is a practice which receives its predicates from pictorial issues, from painting. There are numerous aspects of this radical option. There are, for example, sculptures which take on the color, texture and even the evanescence of painting and collage—Keith Sonnier's for example. Even more important than this, for Tuttle's work, is the kind of pictorializing sculpture which results when the depicted contour and the real contour of an image are congruent. This may take a representational form—a Flag by Johns—or a non-representational one—a lacquered plank by John McCracken. Such a

Pincus-Witten, Robert, “The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, February 1970, pp. cover, 62-67

drew and experimented." He would make gifts of his drawings to his grandchildren on the condition that they would continue a square-to-square grid enlargement with which the drawing would be accompanied and which had already been begun. At length, Tuttle got to college, Trinity College, Hartford, an Episcopalian school in which the artist found "little outlet for doing any creative work." During Tuttle's student days an exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, called "Black, White, and Grey," made a deep impression on the student, as did Agnes Martin, who had gone up to the museum to speak in connection with the exhibition. Shortly thereafter, Tuttle contacted Agnes Martin in New York to ask whether he might purchase one of her drawings. This inquiry marked the beginning of an important friendship. The highly ascetic, Minimalist persuasion of Martin's work is curious to admit in Tuttle at the time, although there may be the dim memory of grandfather's grids in all of this.

Very little remains from Tuttle's student days. He designed sets for student productions of *End Game*, *Zoo Story* and *American Dream*. (The emphasis on Edward Albee is partly explained by the fact that the author is an alumnus of Trinity.) Tuttle also designed two senior yearbooks. In examining *The Trinity Ivy* of 1963, the year Tuttle graduated and enlisted in the Air Force, one is struck by the nervous and delicate wood-block illustrations. Several are full page. They deal in landscape ideas—vortices of solar energy and softer views of streams and border shrubbery. The wood-block illustrations have an expressionizing nostalgia to them that is widespread in semi-abstraction, a nostalgia that is perhaps at odds with the detachment of the cloth octagons—except, perhaps, for the latter's depressed, washed-out range of color.

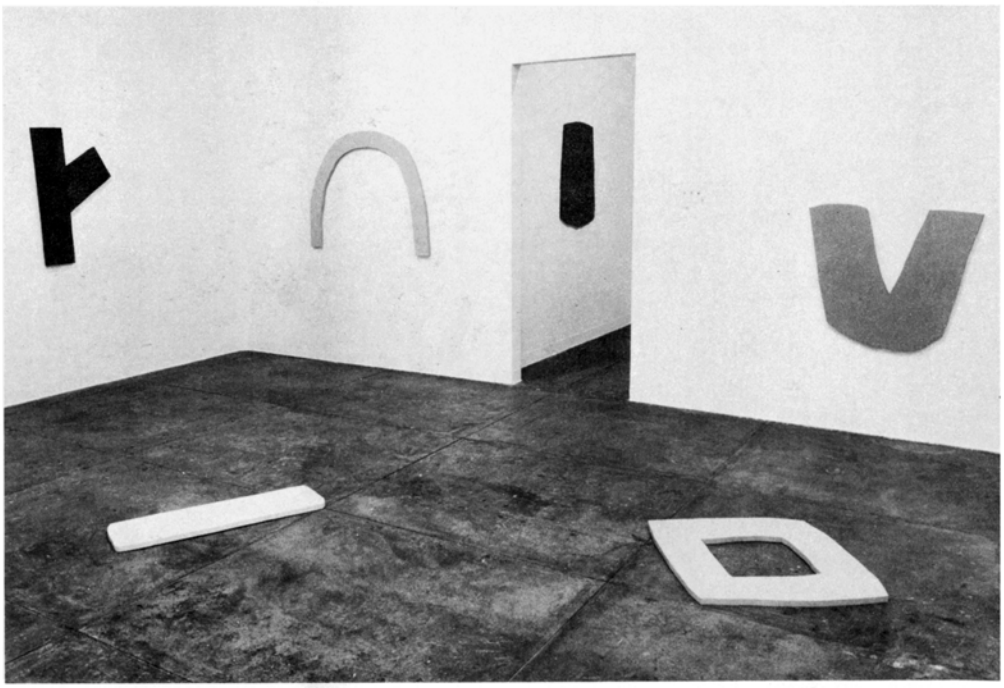
Tuttle's experience with the Air Force exteriorized a break with the past and the mature person suddenly emerges from this episode. Tuttle describes a training that lasted six weeks. Three were spent as an underclassman, three as an upperclassman. The latter's duties included assisting in the "indoctrination" of the underclassmen. Training was completed by undergoing a machine-scored examination, the answers to which, in Tuttle's view, were "perfect median responses."

After "indoctrination" it was unimaginable to score below 80 although a person of military aptitude might score as high as 83. "I blew the machine. I did it on purpose. I got 2. I was everything for the authorities. Catatonic. They said I never could enter military or civilian employment for the rest of my life." At the end of six weeks of training Tuttle was honorably discharged. He was 22. He returned to New York and found modest employment as an assistant at the Betty Parsons Gallery, where he earned enough on which to subsist and still provide sufficient time to work on his painting.

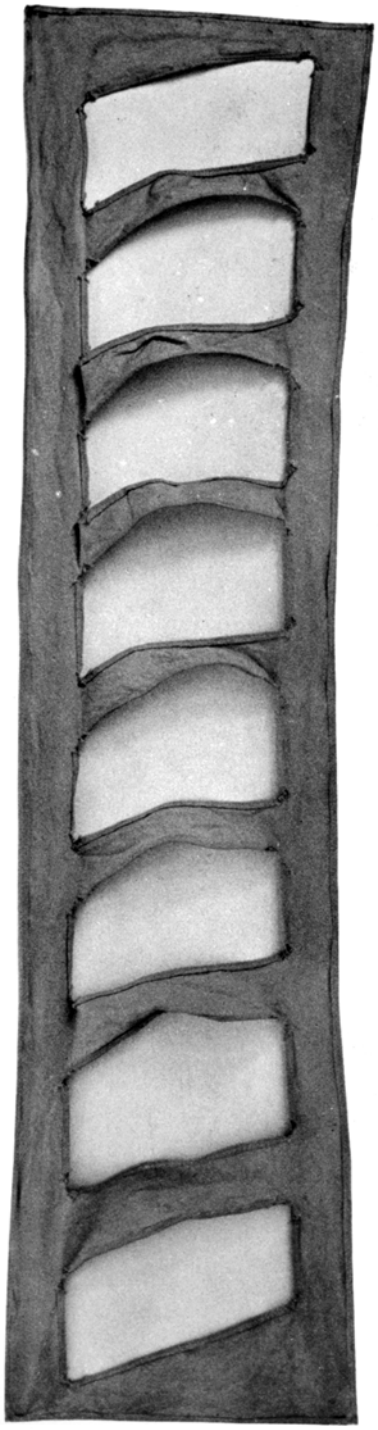
Between 1963 and 1965 Tuttle began to construct things, "often little things, such as 3-inch paper cubes that fit neatly into the palm of your

Richard Tuttle, *The Elephant*, 12½ x 11⅞", 1963. Betty Parsons Gallery.

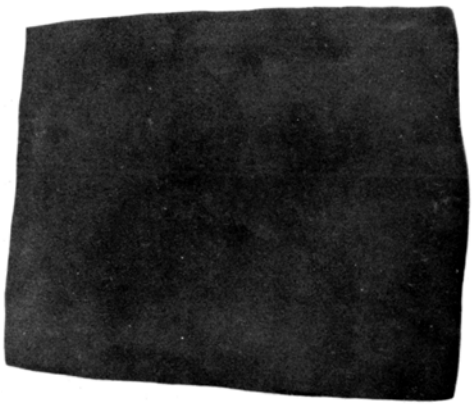
Richard Tuttle, Installation view, Betty Parsons Gallery, September, 1965. On wall, l. to r.: *Talk*, *Hill*, *Torso* and *Water*. On floor: *Yellow*, *Fire*.



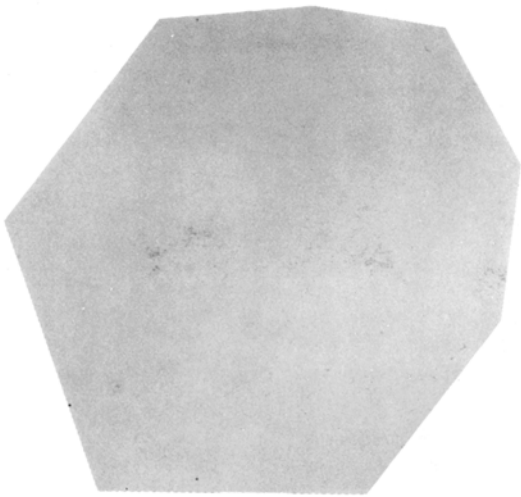
Pincus-Witten, Robert, “The Art of Richard Tuttle,” *Artforum*, February 1970, pp. cover, 62-67



Richard Tuttle, *Ladder Piece*, ca. 6' h., 1966-7.



Richard Tuttle, *Away*, oil on board, 28 x 36½", 1965. Betty Parsons Gallery.



Richard, Tuttle, *White Octagon*, paper, 1969. Betty Parsons Gallery.

pictorializing sculptural option—in part the result of Pop, in part the result of Minimalism—corresponds to the ideogrammatic reliefs of Tuttle. Of course there had been antecedents. One of the reasons that Arp is once more so highly esteemed is that his painted wooden reliefs, particularly those made through the 1920s, articulate a similar attitude.[2] The substantive alignment of Tuttle's reliefs of 1965 with the critical sculptural issues of the early 1960s are striking and important. But, in themselves, I find the reliefs facile and disappointing. History, however, inaugurates a kind of *force majeure* and after the experience of the cloth octagons, and now the paper ones, the ideogrammatic reliefs, wall hung, unitary, displaceable at the possessor's discretion, theoretically appear more interesting. Hindsight has added much, particularly with regard to the issues which are still being argued in the cloth and paper pieces. As Tuttle told me, "I started out making thick wood pieces and they got thinner and thinner. They turned into cloth. And now I am doing paper."

I recently visited the artist in his midtown West Side studio, an anonymous neighborhood for New York, nowhere. The studio occupies the top floor of a tenement. It is painted a dingy white and is largely empty except for essentials, a table, a chair. Books and food are stored in the same cupboard.

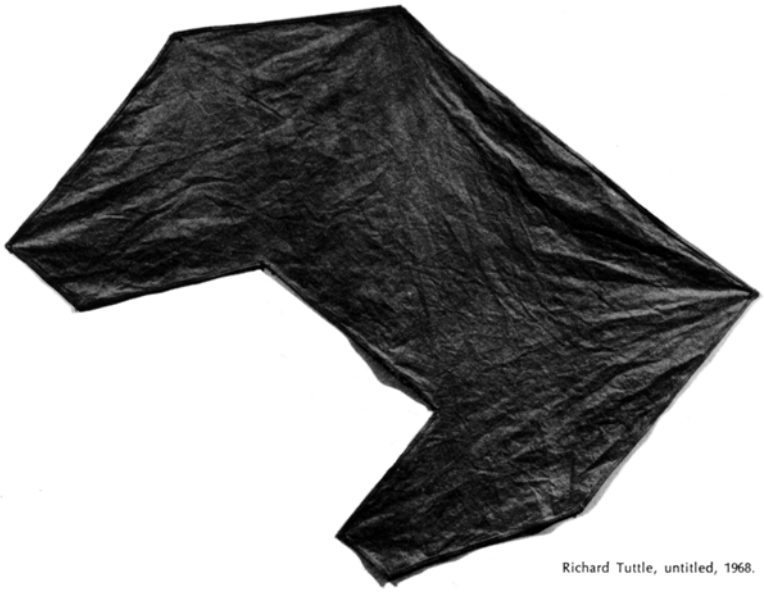
The cloth and the (newer) paper octagons may be affixed limply to the wall, like garments, and they share formal concerns with the work of Sonnier and Robert Morris. They have less in common with Robert Ryman, with whose work one might be tempted at first to compare them. Ryman's papers emphasize surface; their white brushed surfaces reiterate the nature of the wall and the two-dimensionality of the whole undertaking. In the newer Rymans the urge toward seriality has been replaced by other methods which still conform to emphasizing the nature of the wall-like surface, such as brushing around the square module so that the square shape is negatively expressed by the removal of the square template. There may be some affiliation, however, in the use of masking tape. These support the recent Rymans and they are the necessary, though hidden, support of Tuttle's paper octagons.

The octagons had been cut one after the other. Tuttle considered each new one an improvement over the last. He remembered the sequence. The earlier ones tended to have a more pronounced symmetry and axiality, a familiarness. One could easily suppose which part of the octagon was the bottom. It tended to have longer sides. It was heavier. The later octagons were more eccentric, employing greater numbers of variegated lengths to the sides and more unanticipated interior angles.

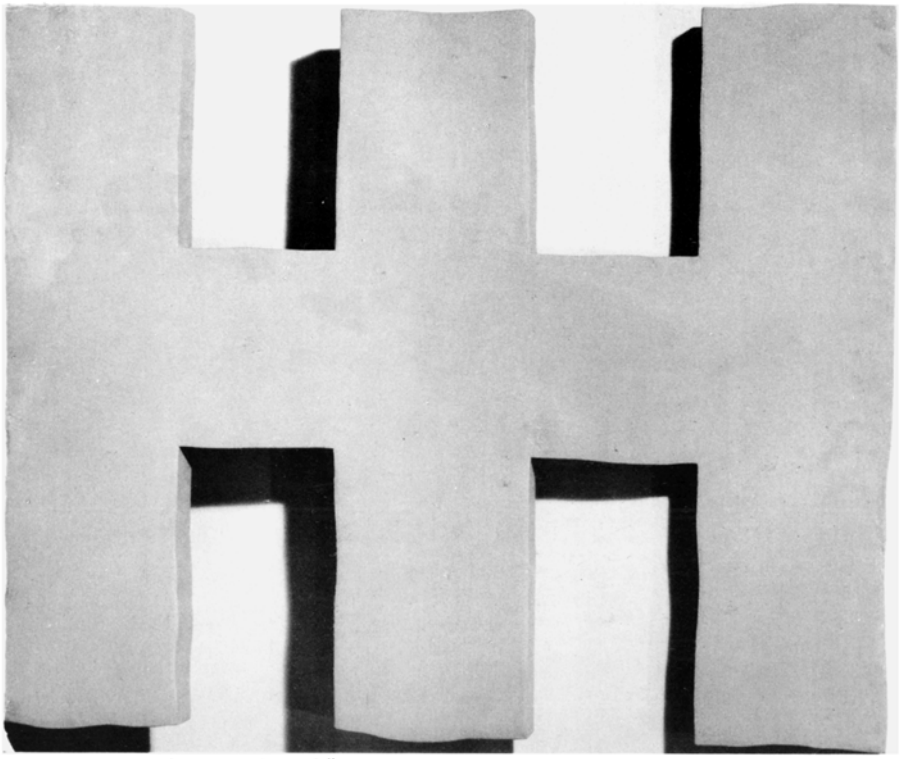
"The later ones are better," said Tuttle.

"I don't know if I agree with you, although I admit that they are less familiar."

"I would like to make all six octagons the same.



Richard Tuttle, untitled, 1968.



Richard Tuttle, *House*, 26½ x 33". Betty Parsons Gallery.

But I'll never do that."

On the mantelpiece of a closed fireplace of what is now the kitchen lay a thin piece of wood through which many nails had carefully been driven, their exposed points spelling TUTTLE.

"Are you going to perforate your signature?"

"I was thinking about it."

"Do you sign the pieces?"

"Signing is equal to destroying the piece. It is no longer a piece of paper. It violates its purity. Here, I'll show you." Tuttle wrote his name with a felt-tip pen large across the face of one of the paper octagons.

"Purity" seems, in large measure, to be a function of the viewer rather than of the work: "They (the papers) set the limits of a person's appreciation. They are disposable and not disposable. Even Rembrandts are disposable. It all depends on the limits of a person's appreciation."

In the end, even the purity of the white paper is questionable. "I have a hatred for this white thing. I can't stand the kind of purity that white implies in our environment. But the kind of purity that comes out of the complete electrical functioning of the whole human being—that's the kind of purity I aspire to. To be free of senses and the intellect. I would really like to be ignorant." The Zen overtones in these sentiments are not incidental. After the success of his cloth exhibition, Tuttle went to Japan for a year, visiting the villages rather than the major cities. He plans to return this year; the two books on his mantelpiece were a Japanese-English dictionary and a Japanese grammar. He does not encourage, however, a description of his own artistic ambitions in terms of his involvement in Oriental attitudes. "Any conceptions that Americans can have about Oriental ideas are really still about their own ideas . . ."

I had copied some inscriptions that Tuttle had made on working drawings for the cloth octagons. One read, "This is a working drawing of a more or less isometric house which made an empty house . . . only seven sides." Another read, "This is a drawing which ended the drawing of the work; the idea came out later in an eight side dull red piece."

"That was a joke," said Tuttle. "They were drawn after the pieces were made. The drawings showed me what I didn't want to know." ■

1. Emily Wasserman, "Richard Tuttle," *Artforum*, March 1968, pp. 56-7. Several important catalogs credit me with this perspicacious review. The catalogs *Live In Your Head, When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle; Bern, March-April 1969, and *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, Whitney Museum, 1969, are in error in this respect.

2. Tuttle acknowledges his debt to Arp although he notes that he became aware of Arp only after the reliefs had been made. This cannot deny the derivation, however, since Arp's attitudes have long been subsumed into wide artistic consciousness. Tuttle, therefore, could have assimilated Arp's thinking from thousands of sources, not one of them being Arp himself. Moreover, the Arps at the Museum of Modern Art were known to Tuttle even if he had not thought about them especially.

There is still another art of the early 1960s to which Tuttle's bears striking resemblance—although in this case it is highly probable that Tuttle was unaware of it. I refer to the singularly important and neglected *Concetti Spaziale* of Lucio Fontana, particularly those reliefs whose surface is but little scored, or lacerated. Fontana was shown at the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1961 although he had been widely exhibited in Europe, with a long career played out in Italy, although he had been born in Argentina.