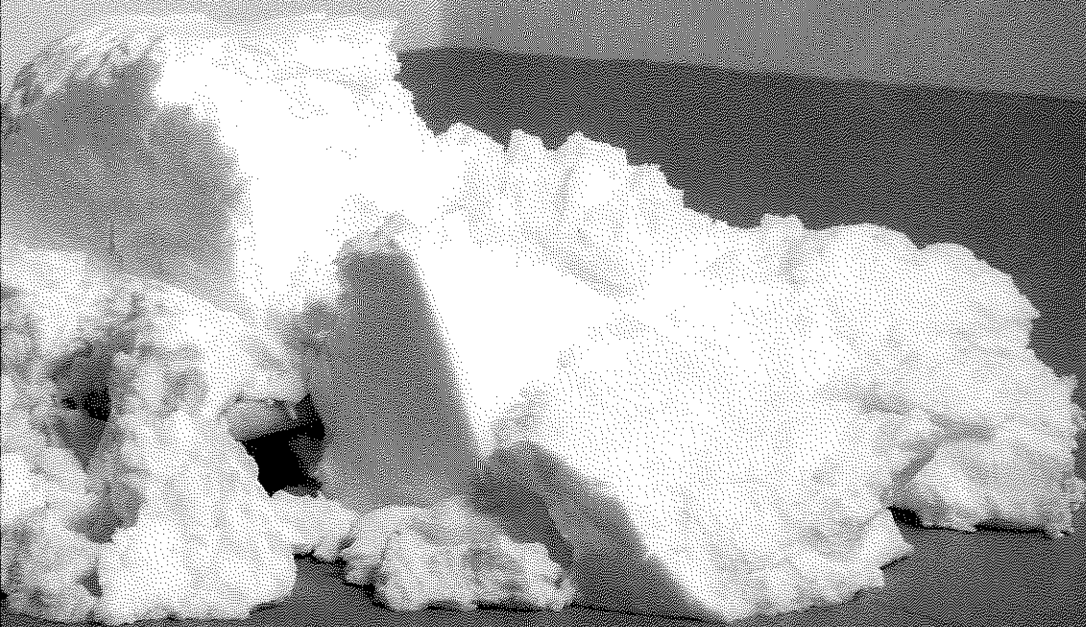
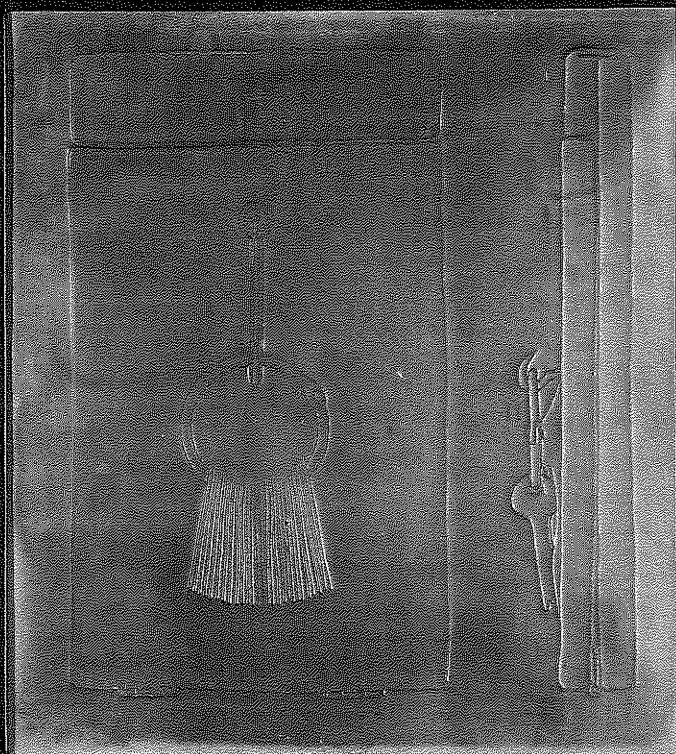
MARTHA BUSKIRK





INTRODUCTION

Consider two examples. One is a notarized statement incorporated into a metal, wood, and imitation leather construction, and the other is an ad published in a major art magazine. Both were authored by artists, employ the written word to make a statement about authorship, and relate to works in which the artist's hand or touch has been displaced to varying degrees by the use of manufactured components or techniques of industrial fabrication. But there the similarities end, because the first, Robert Morris's 1963 *Statement of Esthetic Withdrawal,* plays ironically on the power of the artist to author a work through an act of designation by presenting a legalistic inversion of such an act, whereas the second, a 1990 ad taken out by Donald Judd in *Art in America,* is an utterly serious repudiation of a work that Judd did not want presented under his name.

Morris's *Statement* refers to his 1963 *Litanies,* a construction in which a hanging ring holds 27 keys. Each key is inscribed with a word taken from a translation of one of the notes that comprise Marcel Duchamp's *Green Box,* a text consisting of a series of litanies ascribed by Duchamp to the chariot or sleigh component of his *Large Glass.* Morris exhibited *Litanies* in his first solo exhibition, where it was bought by Philip Johnson. *Statement* came six months later, when Morris still had not received payment and responded with the following declaration, duly signed and notarized: "The undersigned, ROBERT MORRIS, being the maker of the metal construction entitled LITANIES, described in the annexed Exhibit A, hereby withdraws from said construction all esthetic quality and content and declares that from the date hereof said construction has no such quality and content." The play with legal rhetoric continues in the relief presented as Exhibit A, which portrays front and profile views of *Litanies* incised in lead, the same material used in *Litanies* itself.

THE FALL 1989 SHOW OF SCULPTURE AT ACE GALLERY IN LOS ANGELES EXHIBITED AN INSTALLATION WRONGLY ATTRIBUTED TO DONALD JUDD.

FABRICATION OF THE PIECE WAS AUTHORIZED BY GIUSEPPE PANZA WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OR PERMISSION OF DONALD JUDD.

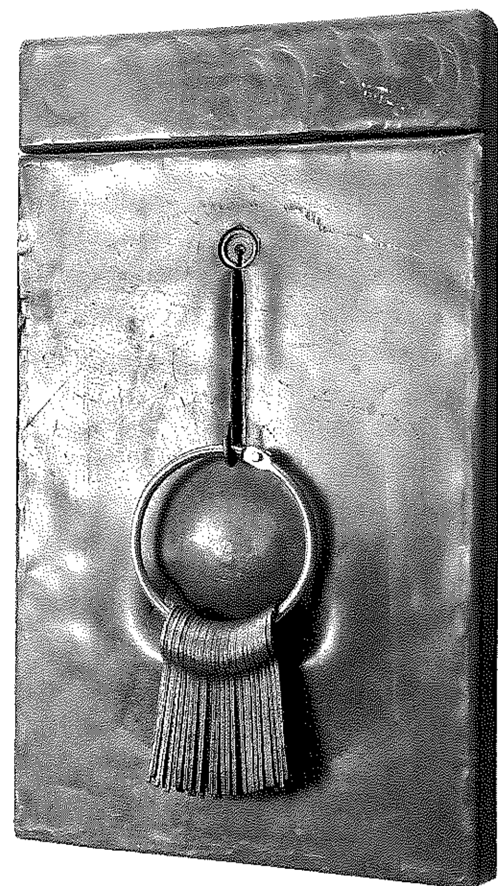
Advertisement placed by Donald Judd, *Art in America,* March 1990.

One issue raised by Morris's statement is the question of what power an artist contin-
es to have over a work of art after it has left the artist's possession; in particular, to what
egree the artist can change the status of the work without physically altering the object it-
lf. If it is the aesthetic of the piece that is at issue, as the wording of the statement suggests,
ne then has to ask by what aesthetic criteria we judge a work such as *Litanies:* a construc-
n consisting of a ready-made ring, individually worked keys, and, set into the lead sur-
ce above the hook from which the ring hangs, a brass lock. What is the content of a work
at makes textual reference to another artist, with those references inscribed on keys that
ll never unlock the actual lock below which they are suspended? If a legal declaration can
rport to remove aesthetic quality and content from a work, the statement also forces us
consider how these qualities might have entered the work in the first place. The familiar
m of keys on a ring continues the challenge presented by Duchamp in the beginning of
twentieth century, when he invented the concept of the readymade to describe works
art he made simply by selecting and so designating a series of everyday objects chosen
cisely because of their familiarity. Although both *Litanies* and *Statement of Esthetic
thdrawal* are constructions rather than readymades, the readymade certainly lies behind
tement, since the linguistic withdrawal of aesthetic attributes (even if ironic) implies a
ceding possibility, the radical act of designation rather than making through which the
dymade is produced. The ultimate irony of *Statement* lies in the fact that, far from sub-
ting content from *Litanies,* it adds to the subtle paradox already contained in the jux-
osition of textual keys and an actual, if nonfunctional, lock. Furthermore, the act of
ing a retroactive overlay of interest to the initial construction suggestively echoes the
that the notes published in Duchamp's *Green Box* played in relation to his *Large Glass.*

The second statement, Judd's quarter-page advertisement in the March 1990 *Art in
erica,* consists of black text surrounded by a simple black outline: "The Fall 1989 show
culpture at Ace Gallery in Los Angeles exhibited an installation wrongly attributed to
ald Judd. Fabrication of the piece was authorized by Giuseppe Panza without the ap-
val or permission of Donald Judd." The ad therefore announces a much more com-
ensive withdrawal, one that encompasses not just aesthetic quality and content but
orship in its entirety. The dispute concerned a 1974 work owned by Giuseppe Panza
installed in his villa in Varese, Italy, which consists of an uninterrupted row of largely
tical five-foot-high galvanized iron plates affixed via hidden brackets so that they stand
inches in front of the wall along three sides of a room. The piece establishes a second
that, despite the weight of the materials involved, appears to float inside the architec-
of the room. In 1989 the Ace Gallery in Los Angeles wanted to borrow this work by
, along with Carl Andre's 1968 *Fall,* also owned by Panza, for an exhibition devoted to
minimal art. Rather than shipping the two large-scale works from Italy, Panza authorized the gallery to refabricate the pieces in Los Angeles. Neither artist was consulted, and both publicly disavowed the copies exhibited under their names once they found out about the Los Angeles versions. Besides the paradoxes that can arise from the authorizing language of contracts or certificates (to be considered in later chapters of this book), there are important issues that need to be raised at the outset.

First, why would it have seemed plausible to a collector and a major art gallery that an unauthorized copy could be substituted for an absent work of art? Or, to ask the question another way, was there anything about the work itself that would have suggested that the copy could be a suitable stand-in for the original object? The contested work by Judd relied on qualities identified with minimalism: industrial materials, simple, geometric forms, the repetition of identical units, and the activation of the surrounding or contained space. By employing methods of industrial fabrication, Judd was able to remove a typical mark of artistic authorship, the evidence of the artist's hand. This could also be seen as the elimination of a significant component of aesthetic quality and content for a more traditional work of art. In that sense, Judd and other artists associated with minimalism participated in an undermining of one traditional measure of authorship which, not coincidentally, also provided an inherent limit on production. Even the use of the term "original" is fraught in relation to works already structured around the act of copying inherent in serial forms. However, as I will argue throughout this book, the removal of the artist's hand, rather than lessening the importance of artistic authorship, makes the sure connection between work and artist that much more significant.

While the shapes involved may seem simple, the issues they raise are complex. The designation of a work made through instructions for industrial fabrication or through the act of selecting an already manufactured object (the readymade paradigm that carries through in minimalism in the use of prefabricated components like bricks or fluorescent fixtures) requires a fully elaborated external structure of support, which includes the framework of explanation, both by the artists themselves and by critics, the adherence to external conventions that limit and control the reproduction of otherwise inherently reproducible works (the assignment of authorship and the use of the limited edition being the most important constraints), and a clear understanding of what, exactly, is being purchased by the collector of such a work. When works of this type were first shown, critics both favorably and unfavorably disposed focused on how these objectlike forms occupy the same space as the viewer. The lack of a pedestal or other barrier separating such simple, often hollow works from their surroundings forces the viewer to be aware of her or his experience unfolding in space and time. Furthermore, this emphasis on the surrounding space has a



ary in another form of exteriority, and that is the externalization of the evidence of rship.

dherence to external conventions that limit and control the production of otherwise ently reproducible works is essential in order for such works to be collected in the t of a system based on the importance of originality and rarity. The mechanisms by such authorship is regulated can range from assumed understandings to detailed n instructions, certificates, and even contractual arrangements. Recent artistic prac- nvolving objects that do not carry inherent evidence of artistic authorship have ne- ted new conventions for designating and maintaining their categorization as works However, there is a precedent in the importance of a sound provenance that con-

Donald Judd, *Untitled* (galvanized iron wall), 1974. ¼"-thick galvanized iron plates, 60" high, along three existing walls, 8" in front of wall. Installation at the Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese, Italy. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Art © Donald Judd Foundation / licensed by VAGA, New York. Photo © Giorgio Colombo, Milan.

firms the assessment of connoisseurship by demonstrating a historical chain of connections to the time and place of a work's production. Such histories help authenticate and therefore secure market value, even as conservation labs have continued to search for ever more precise tools to study and evaluate the material or intrinsic traces of authorship. Evidence that is externalized, however, also makes clear the degree to which the construction of authorship depends on divisions that are fundamentally arbitrary, in the sense that such authorship is based on a whole series of specific, separable, and sometimes even negotiated decisions.

Returning to the Morris and Judd examples, while both are statements, and both are authored by artists, they are not both works of art. The difference in their classification is based on the structure of authorship as a system that addresses itself not just to the question of who is speaking but to the discourse or framework within which a work, as opposed to other types of objects or utterances, will be received and interpreted. Part of this interpretive context is provided by the artist's other works. Another framework is provided by the critical discourse surrounding the artist, a critical discourse in which both Judd and

though the work had been realized once before being sold. Early photographs of the work clearly show a white interior. However, Konrad Fischer apparently sold the work to Panza with limited documentation, and a copy of a drawing by Nauman in the files indicates overall shape rather than construction specifics. While the room was reconstructed for the 1994 Nauman retrospective with a white interior, Panza's version had bare wood inside, and it was in this form that the work appeared in a 1999 MASS MoCA exhibition drawn extensively from the Panza collection now at the Guggenheim. Needless to say, the jarring effect of the unrelentingly bright yellow light reverberating in the glare of the triangular white space made for a very different experience from the one afforded by the color and varied grain of the wood in the competing interpretation of the work. Panza also had questions about which work he owned from Andre's 1968 *Slope* series, made up of rows of plates extending out from a wall at an angle determined by the dimensions of the plate next to the wall, since Panza had a certificate labeled *Slope 2002*, but catalogue listings indicated that he owned *Slope 2001*.[49]

If the certificate had, for Andre, constituted the primary evidence of the work, then its definition of the work would logically have to be correct. However, Andre's emphasis, in this case, on the importance of the work's physical existence, together with the fact that he had already refused another suggestion that one of his works be refabricated rather than shipped for MOCA's "First Show," make Panza's decision to have Andre's 1968 *Fall* refabricated for the 1989 Ace exhibition that much more remarkable. Nor did Panza succeed in authorizing a convincing replica of the work. *Fall* is made from one-inch-thick hot-rolled steel, bent at a right angle to form twenty-one 72 x 28 x 72-inch units arranged along the base of a wall in a 49-foot row. But photographs of the Ace version show that the bend in the steel was far less sharp than in the original. After finding out about the refabrication from a review, Andre insisted in a letter to *Art in America* that "No such 'refabrication' of my work has been authorized by me and any such 'refabrication' is a gross falsification of my work."[50]

If Panza's attitude toward the work in his collection was shaped by conceptual practices, the model could well have been the wall drawings that LeWitt began producing in 1968. For these works, the only object that is actually transferred is a certificate, accompanied by a diagram with instructions for the realization of the drawing. The wall drawings can even exist for a limited period of time in more than one place if a drawing that is already installed is loaned to a temporary exhibition. LeWitt specifically connects the wall drawings to "a musical score that could be redone by any or some people."[51] Furthermore, he has stipulated that they should not be maintained as artifacts: "I would hope that wall drawings would be periodically redrawn if necessary. As the wall becomes older it may

adjacent areas that much of the photographic detail has been retained. Warhol produced the paintings in different sizes and orientations, with some examples further cropped to only two flowers, and variety was also maintained, particularly in the tremendous number of small paintings made using the same screens, by changes in the color combinations. The changes in medium, scale, and color certainly transformed the image, but not so much that Caulfield failed to recognize its source.

Ivan Karp, who was working at the Castelli Gallery at the time of Warhol's 1964 exhibition, remembers the copyright problems with the *Flowers* as "some legal hassle, which is really unfortunate, because he had to pay off with some very valuable pictures." According to Karp, Warhol "was very innocent of doing a disservice to this photographer because this photograph was *not* what you might call a 'remarkable photograph.' It was not an earth-shaking photograph, but Warhol made a *remarkable* series of paintings out of it . . . they were totally successful, and *we sold them all!*"[53] Crone was equally certain about who should get the credit for the success of the work. "Warhol had found the original photo in a woman's magazine; it had won second prize in a contest for the best snapshot taken by a housewife," was his dismissive summation.[54] Both Karp and Crone defended Warhol's claim over the image by insisting that he was more capable of putting it to interesting use than was the woman who happened, perhaps even accidentally, to click the shutter. But the description of Caulfield as an amateur, which has persisted, following Crone, in the Warhol literature, has little to do with her actual status. In fact the image was published in the magazine *Modern Photography* as part of an article about color processors.[55] The photograph is clearly attributed in a caption to Executive Editor Patricia Caulfield, which is also how her name appears on the magazine's masthead, immediately below that of the publisher. And the image would have been hard to miss, since it appears both on the cover and in a two-sided glossy color foldout, where Warhol's multiple use is already suggested in the repetition and variation used to show shifts in the color relations from different processing decisions. In fact its composition was the result of a succession of highly conscious decisions. Caulfield came across the vase of hibiscus flowers in a restaurant in Barbados, where it was set off by a play of light so striking that she interrupted her lunch, got her camera and tripod, and recorded the subject in multiple photographs. The image published in the magazine was further composed through cropping to create the tight arrangement of flowers and foliage that obviously appealed to Warhol.[56]

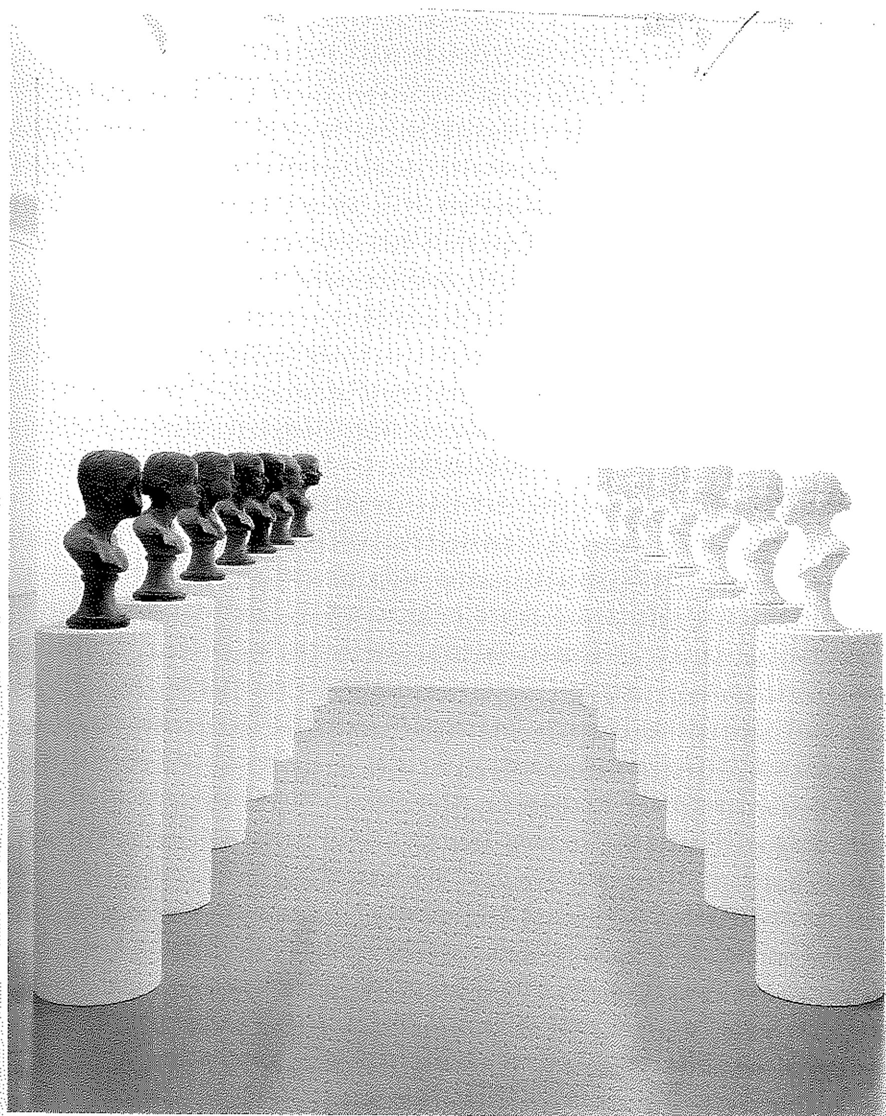
In the case of the *Flowers* there are at least three contenders for authorship: Caulfield for the original photograph, Warhol for its reinterpretation as a series of silkscreened images, and Sturtevant for the recontextualization of the reinterpretation. Other lesser claimants include Geldzahler, sometimes credited with coming across the photo while paging through magazines and suggesting its use to Warhol, and the various assistants who helped produce the works using some of the same screens later used by Sturtevant, but under the umbrella of Warhol's Factory production and authorship. Warhol's better-known authorship claim over the *Flowers* paintings is thus bracketed by the work of two female authors, one disparaged by Warhol's supporters, and another uninterested in considering the significance of gender in the assertion of authorial power. The inaccuracy in Crone's account of the *Flowers* series is telling for how he used both amateur status and the negative stereotypes ascribed to women's magazines to assert the priority of Warhol's appropriation. Asked some years later about the whole business, Caulfield responded, "What's irritating is to have someone like an image enough to use it, but then denigrate the original talent."[57] Caulfield went on to have a substantial career in the field of nature photography. And there are other reasons why this example of appropriation cannot be made to fit the cliché of high-minded artistic interest coming in conflict with the banal world of commercial image production. Karp's complaint about the unfairness of Warhol having to pay out for the photo used in *Flowers* with valuable art work assumed a greater artistic merit as the basis for the greater importance of Warhol's version. But he also emphasized, in the same breath, how salable Warhol's paintings were—their success, in fact, as artistic commodities.

In his early work Warhol had an unerring eye for resonant images that could be made to speak of the culture from which they were plucked simply as a result of the way they were transferred, blown up, or reiterated. Crow, in particular, has contested the reading of Warhol's imagery (following Warhol's own pronouncements) as passive and impersonal, arguing the significance of subjects associated with death or suffering in Warhol's early work.[58] Many of the photographs Warhol selected were so telling that they seemed to belong to the culture at large. But for the original photographers, the familiarity or historic significance of a particular image did not make it anonymous, an authorless image waiting for Warhol to fill the void. Warhol's use of images published in *Life* magazine therefore sparked protests from Charles Moore, whose photographs from a 1963 story in *Life* were the basis for the 1963–1964 *Race Riot* series, and Fred Ward, whose photograph of Jacqueline Kennedy that appeared on the cover of *Life* not long after the assassination of John F. Kennedy became part of Warhol's 1963–1964 *Jackie* series. In both of these cases Warhol again used works of art to settle out of court, with Ward receiving a painting from the *Jackie* series and Moore, in an ironic twist, winding up with prints from the *Flowers* portfolio.[59] Warhol's legal problems led him to change his methods in his later work, relying more on photographs produced by assistants or going through the process of getting copyright permission when he used cartoon characters in his 1981 *Myths* series.[60] And the Warhol Foundation has taken out insurance against future copyright claims, a fact brought to light by a

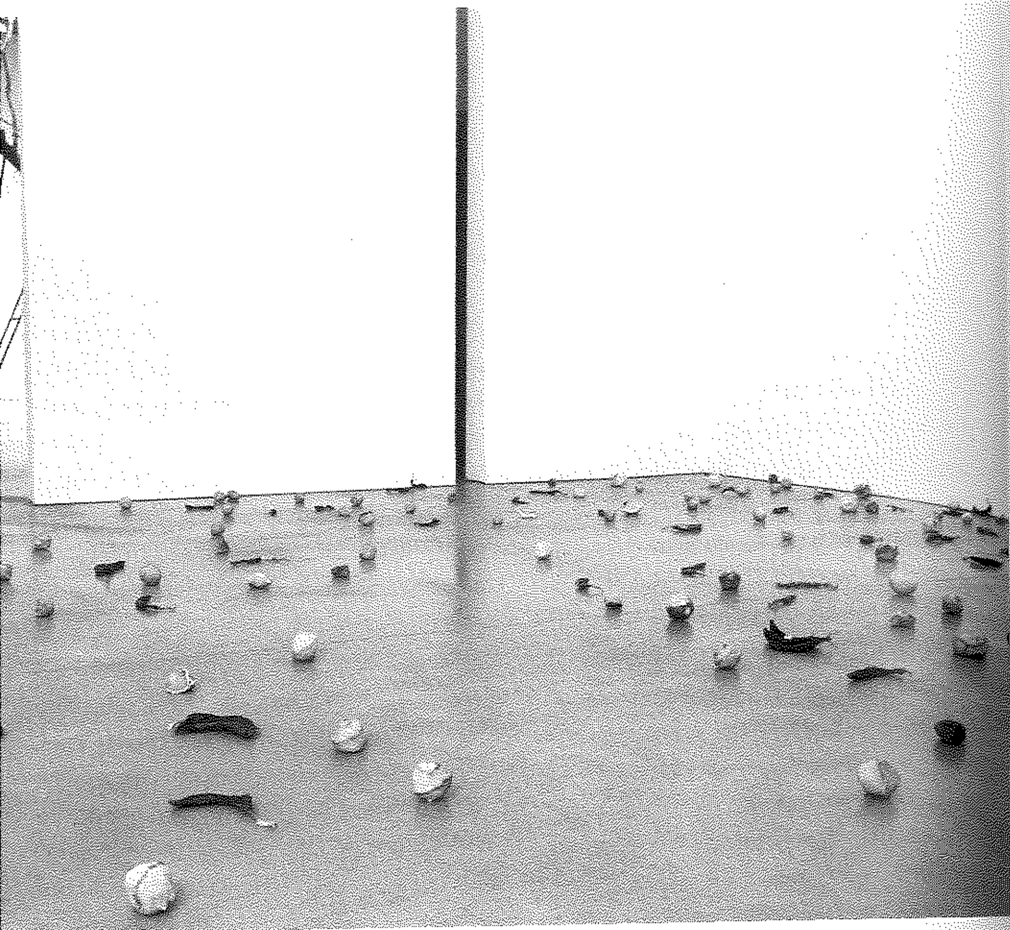
played as a part of his myth of rebirth, as a substance vital to sustaining life, and as a highly malleable solid. Chocolate has also made numerous appearances, perhaps most notably in the work of Dieter Roth, who was adamant that the organic substances in his work not be subject to preservation steps that would slow decay or prevent infestation. It is also significant that Hannah Wilke's bodily investigation of female beauty included, in addition to her provocative chewing-gum forms, the casting of herself in chocolate. Antoni cites feminist work of the 1970s, including that of Wilke and Ana Mendieta, for the central importance of the body as well as "the humor, the process, the emphasis on performance, the intensely visceral quality of their work."[41]

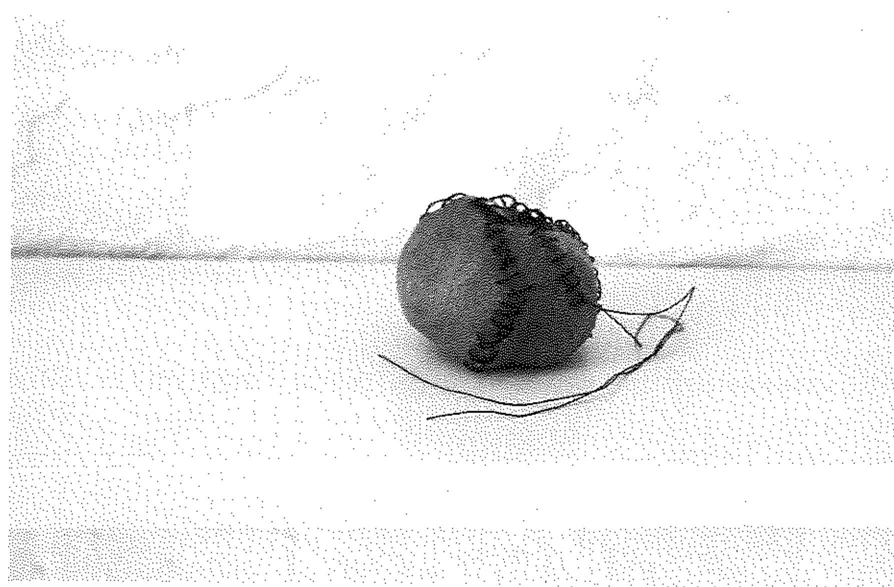
Such visceral qualities are readily apparent in Antoni's *Lick and Lather,* where the complex interplay of presence and absence, trace and reference, shares much with *Gnaw. Lick and Lather* began, however, not with minimalist cubes but with fourteen life-sized busts of Antoni herself, seven cast of chocolate, the other seven of soap. She then proceeded to lick away the features of the chocolate busts and to lather away those of the ones made from soap during prolonged bathing, resulting in a subtly disconcerting array of partially effaced portrait sculptures, each transformed in a different and disconcerting fashion. In an essay that explores Antoni's connections to earlier feminist practices, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth posits the use of the body and of self-representation in *Lick and Lather* as a conscious adoption of narcissism, once an accusation leveled at women artists of the 1970s who made their bodies central to their work, as a strategy that "appropriates it as one of the mechanisms of aesthetic self-generation."[42] Yet a striking feature of the work is how Antoni has employed her body to transform what was formed from the same. "Narcissism is often discussed with respect to *Lick and Lather,* but I also think of Pygmalion," says Antoni in reference to this oddly intimate yet externalized process of self-fashioning.[43]

Presented atop cylindrical pedestals arranged in a circle for their initial appearance in Venice, or in facing rows of chocolate and soap for their subsequent installation in New York, they suggested a reworked version of the proverbial portrait gallery. It was, in fact, a work that she conceived in response to the classical tradition in sculpture that she knew would be much in evidence in the context of the 1993 Venice Biennale, where *Lick and Lather* was first shown, and an even more specific association was suggested by the erosion evident in outdoor sculpture.[44] Her use of chocolate and soap further shares a reliance on the potential for transformation from liquid to solid with the process of casting used for any of the traditional metals. But, as she told an interviewer, the mold was made as a direct cast from her body, "so there is no sculpting in the initial form except for the imitation of the classical stand. The only sculpting was the licking and the washing."[45] These materials are also formed into their familiar guises as consumer goods by a version of casting, just as her actions upon them are similar to what commonly happens to those consumer goods,



Janine Antoni, *Lick and Lather,* 1993–1994. Seven soap and seven chocolate self-portrait busts, installation dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York. Photo: John Bessler.





same conservator who later worked on Leonard's fruit. The multistage process to which they were subjected included degreasing through repeated acetone baths and a final coating with a synthetic resin for preservation, followed by cinnamon for aroma and appearance.[55] While some artists and even conservators would rather allow changes to appearance than completely transform the material itself, Gober's response came down firmly on the side of appearance. The result was so convincing that one person at the exhibition opening who was not attuned to the subtleties of Gober's play with familiar objects and forms decided to help himself, with the "ensuing scramble" leading Richard Flood to wonder "if they were trying to protect the art or him."[56]

Though their ingredients and initial making connected the donuts to the familiar foodstuff, the conservation treatment could be argued to have transformed them into bizarre representations, raising the question of why not simply simulate the actual object in the first place. In another respect, however, they were entirely consistent, in their transformed state, with Gober's play with hand-made readymades, such as the painted plaster versions of subtly altered sinks, urinals, and bags of kitty litter, or the surreal objectlike body fragments made with beeswax and human hair. Nor can the role of conservation be thought of as simply an afterthought, since decisions about whether or not to try to arrest changes often go to the heart of why the materials may have been used in the first place. In the same interview in which he spoke of preserving the donuts, he indicated that the

bag, also specially made, could potentially be replaced, and he even suggested that his sinks could be repainted with the same type of white enamel paint should they yellow over time.[57] The donuts, in their peculiar permanence, remind viewers of the transience that would usually be their fate. In this respect they evoke the *vanitas* theme of Dutch still life painting, where mortality was suggested in representations of abundance arrested just at the onset of the decay.

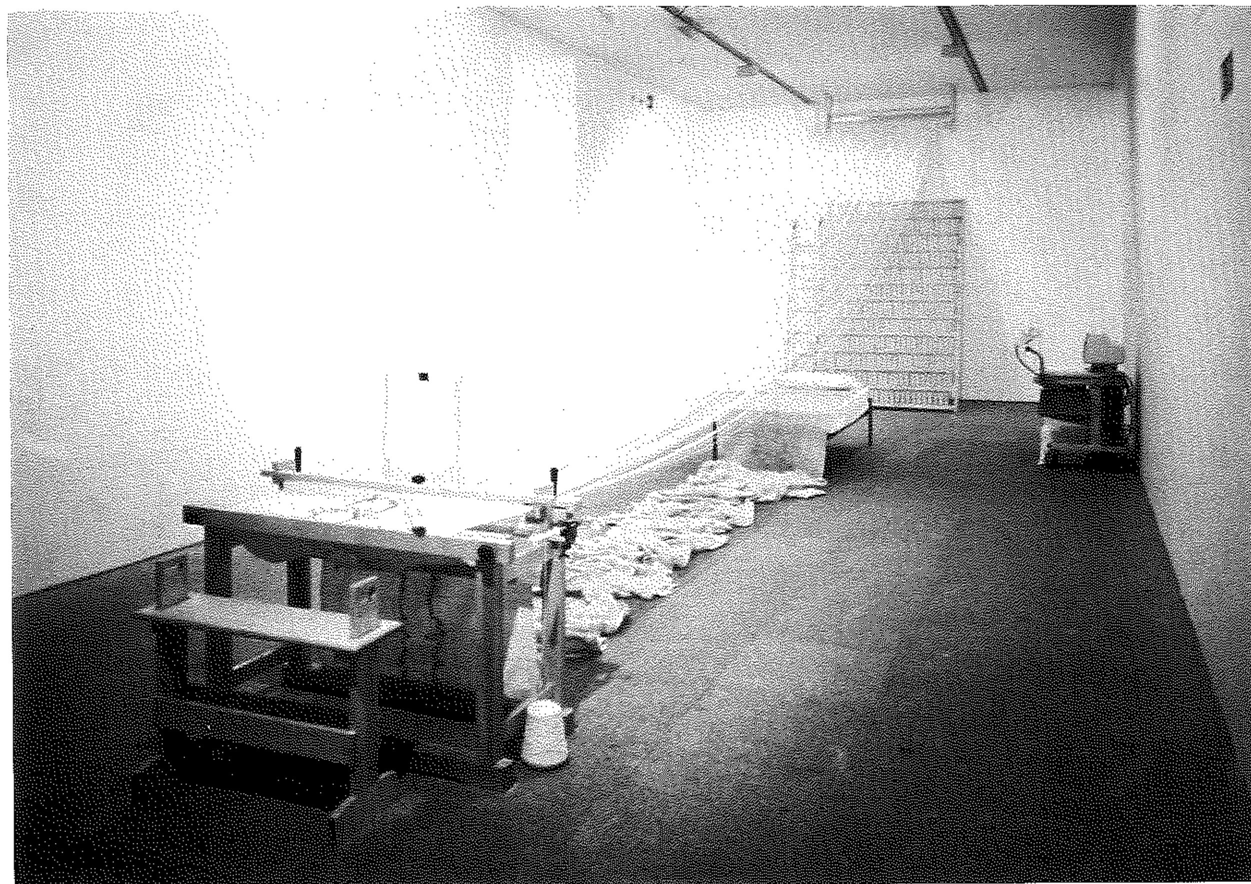
If extravagant preservation steps or planned decay represent two extremes in the face of perishable materials, another alternative, following conceptual art's challenge to a definition of art based on the physical object, relies on a process of remaking to ensure the work's long-term existence. Nayland Blake has cited Lawrence Weiner's work in particular for having established procedures for dealing with works that are in one way or another ephemeral in nature. Yet it is equally significant that he made this connection in the context of a discussion of his 1998 *Feeder 2*, a large-scale gingerbread house that made concrete the very familiar but nonetheless abstract image from the story of Hansel and Gretel.[58] The command that this seven-foot-high structure exerted over its physical environment contained suggestions of the minimalist object, but with the significant difference that it was simultaneously both abstract (because based on a fanciful image from a fairy tale) and recognizable (as a highly unlikely house), and part of its activation of the viewer's space was due to the powerful aroma of the gingerbread used in its construction. The conceptual precedents came into play not for the work's initial fabrication, for which Blake relied on a collaboration with a New York bakery, but in the process of defining what would constitute the work over the long term. A strategy of remaking that would allow the cookies to be replaced as needed was dictated both by the inherent instability of the gingerbread and because the panels that constituted the house as shown in the gallery had been extensively damaged by audience members who apparently could not resist breaking off bits of the aromatic confection.

"I see myself as a very radical formalist," Blake told an interviewer in a discussion of how a larger set of concerns may be articulated in the work that he produces as an artist.[59] Blake had already used edible substances in his art, specifically chocolate Easter bunnies that incorporated various substances including strychnine in an evocation of African bowli (and which were also connected to the rabbit characters that often turn up in Blake's sculptures, videos, and performances).[60] While the incorporation of foodstuffs in a work of art has the power to evoke a wide range of associations for viewers, it also arose from specific preoccupations of the artist. Temptation was part of the gingerbread house, but Blake showed it together with another work called *Gorge* that he hoped would give the audience a different feeling about wanting to consume his realized fairy tale. The hour-long video,

the "'foreign body' also refers literally to the body of a foreigner."[74] By projecting this scientific image of the body into the real space of the cylindrical room, Hatoum forces the viewer to assume the vantage point of the examining instrument itself. That such information can be reported out from the interior of the body is indeed remarkable; yet to anyone not used to reading this form of modern medical imaging, the intimate vantage thus presented appears alien, unfamiliar, and at times almost entirely abstract. The view of the body made possible by the mediation of this highly specialized camera, already strangely lacking any markers of context or scale, is further transformed by its projection, isolated and enlarged, into the space occupied by the viewer.

How might the traces of presence be marked? The idea of the touch, traditionally focused on a specific region of the body in the search for evidence of the artist's hand, has been fractured and displaced into the multitude of ways artists use their bodies to act upon materials and also turn the process of representation back upon themselves to record traces of their physical presence. Yet the artist is far more likely to have an ongoing connection to a work that incorporates a relationship to its surrounding environment than to a more traditional work where evidence of the hand is part of a self-contained object. The intersection of performance and installation, and the complex oscillation between presence and absence, in Antoni's *Slumber* might therefore serve as an appropriate conclusion to what is actually an open-ended inquiry. *Slumber* has been ongoing since 1993, and each time it is shown Antoni must renew her connection to the work by sleeping in the bed that is part of the installation while attached to an electroencephalograph machine that allows her to leave a record of her rapid eye movement, which is printed out on a long strip of paper. Then, over the course of many days or even weeks she weaves these abstract records of her dreams into a blanket, using strips torn from the nightgown she has worn during the night spent recording her dreams to delineate the REM pattern, in a process that continues until the garment is completely incorporated into the blanket. Thus the blanket grows longer each time the work is exhibited, carrying from site to site traces of each past exhibition woven quite literally into the fabric of the work.

When *Slumber* was shown in a 1994 exhibition at the Reina Sofía in Madrid, Hatoum's *Corps étranger* was installed nearby. As Antoni sat at the loom incorporating the record of her own body's rhythms into *Slumber* she could hear the sound from Hatoum's work, so she would weave through the day "listing to the pulse of her body."[75] While the specificity of such an experience may not be visible to viewers who encounter the work in each of its new contexts, the now lengthy blanket nonetheless presents powerful evidence of Antoni's continuous process of reengagement. Not only is the work always ongoing, but one of its particularly striking features is how precisely it transforms her presence into the



Janine Antoni, *Slumber*, 1993.
Loom, yard, bed, nightgown, EEG machine, and artist's REM readings.
Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.