The Art Institute of Chicago

January 17 through February 22, 1970
The Art Institute of Chicago

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Foreword

American art of the past decade has taken on new dimensions. No longer are artists confined to the scale of painting and sculpture which was the norm twenty years ago. Nor for that matter do artists confine themselves to works which can be completed in the studio, but today employ electronic engineers, carpenters, machinists and a wide variety of talent to achieve their artistic goals. Indeed, it may be seriously questioned whether the old concept of a museum, as we have grown to know it, serves the need of many present-day artists.

This exhibition assembled by our Curator of Twentieth Century Art, A. James Speyer, and consisting of twenty-eight works by twenty-five artists reflects this trend or concept. Mr. Speyer has collected a show which illustrates certain aspects of contemporary painting and sculpture in the United States, introducing some well-known talent and some lesser known. This in no way suggests a new school or trend, but rather the remarkable versatility and imagination of our country's artists. The result is an exciting exhibition, rather highly selective, and pertinent to an age where space and environment have given the artists many new creative ideas. 

C. C. Cunningham
Jury of Awards

John Coplans
Curator
Pasadena Art Museum
Pasadena, California

Daniel J. Robbins
Director
Museum of Art
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, Rhode Island

A. James Speyer
Curator of XXth Century Art
Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Acknowledgements

In assembling such an exhibition, one must strongly rely on the help of one's friends, professional and personal. I would especially like to thank Mr. Walter Hopps, Acting Director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., for his assistance. Maurice Tuchman, Curator of the Los Angeles County Museum, Martin Friedman, Director of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and Robert M. Doty, Curator of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, implemented important loans from their respective Museums. It is more than kind of John Coplans, Curator of the Pasadena Art Museum, and Daniel Robbins, Director of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, to agree to serve on the Jury of Awards. Everett McNear's design has again served us in the format of the catalogue. Miss Anne d'Harnoncourt has been of the greatest assistance and constructive influence. Above all, the patience, generosity and enthusiasm of the galleries and participating artists merit our warmest thanks for making the exhibition possible.

A. James Speyer
Introduction

For the past decade, the American Exhibition has given the Art Institute of Chicago an opportunity to show special movements in contemporary art by a limited number of outstanding artists. The traditional concept of an exhibition presenting a panorama of painting and sculpture across the country has long been outmoded because of the great increase in artists’ activity, as well as the intensified, widespread dissemination of information about them and their work. There are twenty-five artists represented in this year’s 69th American Exhibition. A number of them have been shown previously at the Art Institute, but with works very different from those in the present exhibition. Some of the artists are well-known nationally, but their work has not yet been seen here. All of the work is non-objective; there is no figuration of any kind. However, in the absence of imitative naturalism, these paintings and sculptures frequently achieve a purity of abstraction which is directly and incisively related to nature. The dark and light paintings of Olitski or Cooper are not less than the essence of night and day. The molten turbulence of Poons’ paint, the limpid drip of Van Buren’s resin or the combinations of ordinary, humble materials in Morris’s or Smithson’s works give us new insight into the elements and composition of our world. This year, the scale of most pieces is large. The materials vary widely. The surface is generally the focus, while in many works the surface itself becomes immaterial in proportion to the observer’s concentration. This is as true in Kaufman’s delicately warped plastic planes as in the mysterious translucency of Valentine’s or Alexander’s sharply cast volumes, the mirror penetrations of Krebs’ laser beams, or the shifting emphasis from polished steel to plexiglas in Judd’s sculpture. In many of the objects, we are never allowed to forget the hand of the artist; in some instances the work is in a medium which requires technical aids; in others it is executed by fabricators from the artist’s specifications. There is a wide range from the severe purity of McCracken’s slabs to Ron Davis’s elaborate paintings in polyester resin, or the exuberant romanticism of Gilliam’s draped canvases. There is actually a most interesting and marked difference in the spirit of work from the East and the West Coasts. One feels a unity in the endeavor of artists from Los Angeles, in the materials which they use and in the absolutely cool form and elusive content. Artists from New York City, and in this exhibition, Washington, D.C., are more divergent, one from the other, in their use of materials and in their expression. But there are close relationships between the works displayed here, regardless of geographic derivation, and significantly, this is a group of artists who are primarily concerned with a visual poetry.

A. James Speyer
Peter Alexander


1
Orange-Black, 1969
cast polyester resin,
8 feet x 7 inches x 7 inches
Lent by the artist

2
Brown-Black, 1969
cast polyester resin,
8 feet x 7 inches x 7 inches
Lent by the artist
Illustrated

3
Yellow-Green, 1969
cast polyester resin,
8 feet x 4 inches x 4 inches
Lent by the artist
Carl Andre

Born in Quincy,
Massachusetts, 1935.

Studied with Patrick Morgan,
1953, and with
Frank Stella, 1958.

Worked on the Pennsylvania
Railroad, 1960-64.

Lives in New York City.

4

144 Pieces of Zinc, 1968
12 feet x 12 feet
(12 inch squares)

Lent by the Milwaukee Art Center
Rockne Krebs


5

Clipper Flower, 1969
acrylic plastic,
10 feet 6 inches x 17 feet x 5 feet 9 inches
Lent by the Jefferson Place Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Illustrated
Aleph², 1969
photon structure,
11 x 23 x 23 feet
Lent by the Jefferson Place
Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Illustrated
Sam Francis

Born in San Mateo, California, 1923.
Attended the University of California, Berkeley, 1941-43;
studied with David Parks at
the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco,
1945-46; University of California (B.A., M.A.), 1948-
Traveled widely around the world, 1957-59.

Lives in Santa Monica, California.

7
Green, 1967
acrylic on canvas,
10 x 8 feet
Lent by the Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York
Illustrated

8
Sun Line, 1967
acrylic on canvas,
7 feet 2 inches x 11 feet 6½ inches
Lent by the Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York

9
Untitled, 1967
acrylic on canvas,
8 x 10 feet
Lent by the Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York
Alan Saret

Born in New York City, 1944.
Lives in New York City.

10
True Jungle: Canopy
Forest, 1968
painted wire,
c. 9 x 18 x 4 feet
Lent by the Whitney Museum
of American Art, New York
Illustrated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ron Cooper</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Born in New York City, 1943.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attended the Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1963.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lives in Venice, California.</strong></td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Untitled, 1969</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sprayed polyester resin,</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 feet 4 inches x 7 feet 4 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lent by the Ace Gallery,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustrated (a related work, not in the present exhibition)</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ron Davis

Born in Santa Monica, California, 1937.
Attended the University of Wyoming, Laramie, 1955-56; Yale University—Norfolk Summer School of Music and Art, 1962; San Francisco Art Institute, 1960-64.
Lives in Los Angeles.

13
Grey Room, 1969
polyester resin and fiberglass,
4 feet 6 inches x 11 feet 6 inches
Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Illustrated

14
Way
polyester resin and fiberglass,
4 feet 6 inches x 11 feet 6 inches
Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Donald Judd

Born in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, 1928.
Attended the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1948-49; Art Students League of New York, 1947-53; Columbia University (Fine Arts Department), 1958-61.
Lives in New York City.

15
Untitled (blue), 1968
stainless steel and plexiglas,
33 x 68 x 48 inches
Lent by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

16
Untitled (amber), 1968
stainless steel and plexiglas,
3 x 7 x 4 feet
Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

17
Untitled (yellow), 1968
stainless steel and plexiglas,
3 x 7 x 4 feet
The Art Institute of Chicago Illustrated
DeWain Valentine

Born in Fort Collins, Colorado, 1936.
Attended the University of Colorado, Boulder (B.F.A., 1958); Yale University-Norfolk Summer School of Music and Art, 1958; University of Colorado (M.F.A., 1960).
Lives in Venice, California.

18

Untitled—Curved Slab, 1969
cast polyester resin,
7 feet 8 inches
x 7 feet 10 inches x 2 feet
Lent by the Ace Gallery,
Los Angeles
Illustrated
Sam Gilliam

Born in Tupelo, Mississippi, 1933.

19
Carousel Form II, 1969
acrylic on canvas, with powdered aluminum, 10 x 75 feet (suspended and draped to 11 x 26 x 15 feet)
Lent by the artist
Illustrated
Robert Morris  

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, 1931.  
Attended the University of Kansas City, Kansas City Art Institute, 1948-50; California School of Fine Arts, 1951; Reed College, Oregon, 1953-55; Hunter College, New York (M.A.), 1961-62.  
Lives in New York City.

20  
Untitled, 1968  
industrial waste; asphalt, threads, copper tubing, steel cable, wool, felt, lead, and mirrors,  
2 x 14 x 18 feet  
Replica of the piece in the collection of Philip C. Johnson, New Canaan, Connecticut.
At the artist's request, this work is not reproduced.

Robert Irwin

Born in Long Beach, California, 1928.
Attended the Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1948-50;
Jepson Art Institute, 1951;
Chouinard Art Institute, 1952-54.
Lives in Los Angeles.

21
Untitled, 1969
acrylic paint on cast acrylic disc,
54 inches diameter
The Art Institute of Chicago
Kenneth Noland


Teaches at Bennington College, Vermont. Lives in New York City.

22
White Median, 1968 acrylic on canvas, 7 feet 2 inches x 18 feet 5 inches Lent by the Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York Illustrated
Jules Olitski

Born in Gomel, Russia, 1922.
Lives in New York City.

Outrider, 1969
acrylic emulsion on canvas, 8 feet 9 inches x 17 feet
Lent by Mr. Graham Gund, New York
Illustrated

Goozler, 1969
acrylic emulsion on canvas, 8 feet 9 inches x 15 feet 1 inch
Lent by the Lawrence Rubin Gallery, New York
Keith Sonnier

Born in Mamou, Louisiana, 1931.
Attended the University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1959-63; lived in France, 1963.
Teaching assistant at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1966--.
Lives in New York City.

Display, 1970
neon, glass and strobe lights,
c, 14 x 18 feet
Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Illustrated (a related work, not in the present exhibition)
Fred Sandback
Born in Bronxville,
New York, 1943.
Attended Williston Academy,
1957-61; Theodor Heuss
Gymnasium, Heilbrunn, West
Germany, 1961-62; Yale
University and Yale School of
Art and Architecture (with
Donald Judd), 1962-66.
Lives in New York City.

26
Untitled, 1969
wire construction in a space
c. 6 x 18 feet
Lent by the Dwan Gallery,
New York
Illustrated (a related work,
not in the present exhibition)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Larry Poons</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>28</th>
</tr>
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</table>
No adequate photograph of this work is available.

Robert Whitman
Born in New York City, 1935.
Attended Rutgers University,
New Brunswick, New Jersey
(B.A., 1957); and Columbia
University, New York,
Lives in New York City.

29
Untitled, 1967
light and air in a space,
c. 18 x 20 feet
Lent by the artist
Robert Smithson
Born in Passaic, New Jersey, 1938.
Attended the Art Students League of New York.
Lives in New York City.

30
Mirrors and Shelly Sand, 1969
c. 1 x 5 x 20 feet
Lent by the Dwan Gallery, New York
Illustration of artist's original drawing
Sol LeWitt

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, 1928.
Attended Syracuse University, New York (B.F.A.), 1945-49;
taught at the Museum of Modern Art School, New York, 1964-67;
taught at Cooper Union, New York, 1967.
Lives in New York City.

31  2234
Wall Drawing 4117, 1969
graphite on wall surface,
8 x 16 feet
Lent by the Dwan Gallery, New York
Illustration of artist's original drawing
Craig Kauffman


32
Le mur s’en va I, 1969
acrylic lacquer on acrylic plastic,
6 feet 1 inch × 4 feet x 8½ inches
Lent by the Pace Gallery, New York
Illustrated

33
Le mur s’en va II, 1969
material and dimensions same as above
Lent by the Pace Gallery, New York

34
Le mur s’en va III, 1969
material and dimensions same as above
Lent by the Pace Gallery, New York
Richard Van Buren

Born in Syracuse, New York, 1937.
Attended San Francisco State College, the University of Mexico, and Mexico City College. Traveled and worked in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, 1962-63. Teaches at the School of Visual Arts and New York University. Lives in New York City.

35

Untitled, 1969
fiberglass, clear casting polyester resin, polyester laminating resin, aluminum bronze powder, water color, (17 elements)
c. 9 x 11 feet
Lent by the Bykert Gallery, New York
Illustrated
Larry Bell

Born in Chicago, 1939.
Attended the Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1957-59.
Lives in Venice, California.

36

Untitled (clear), 1969
vacuum-plated glass,
44 x 44 x 44 inches
Lent by the Pace Gallery, New York
Illustrated (a related work, not in the present exhibition)
John McCracken
Born in Berkeley, California, 1934.
Attended the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland.
Lives in Venice, California.

37
Untitled, 1966
polyurethane, fiberglass and lacquer,
7 feet x 3 feet 10 inches x ½ inch
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Mayer, Winnetka, Illinois

38
Don't Tell Me When to Stop, 1966-67
plywood, fiberglass and lacquer,
10 feet 3 inches x 20½ inches x 3½ inches
Lent by the Kleiner Foundation, Beverly Hills, California. Courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Illustrated