The Museum of Modern Art
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OCEAN PROJECTS, an exhibition which documents works recently executed by Peter Hutchinson and Dennis Oppenheim in the water off the island of Tobago, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art through November 30. To record the projects, the artists have arranged photographs--which they themselves took--and maps together with brief descriptive statements.

The four works by Hutchinson reported on in the show were carried out under water at depths up to forty feet. Usually his materials were local plants and fruit which he placed in simple arrangements. Flower Triangle, an ephemeral piece, consists of leguminous yellow flowers planted in six feet of water. Threaded Calabash, a twelve-foot arc of rope on which the fruits are placed a couple of feet apart, is anchored in a coral reef. In the more complex Arc project, the artist placed plastic bags at intervals on a piece of rope about fifty feet long. Within the bags are coral rocks and decomposing calabashes; the weight of the rocks counterbalances the buoyant gas released from the decomposing carbohydrates and maintains the arc-shape of the work. Underwater Dam, the most permanent work, was created by placing bags of sand to block a fifty-foot undersea canyon.

Dennis Oppenheim used the surface of the ocean as well as the beach and the ocean floor in the five works documented in this exhibition. Traps and Cowhide involves all three locations: cowhide and two wooden traps were placed on the beach and red dye spread nearby on the edge of the water. At a point about eight miles away the artist placed a second piece of cowhide on the ocean floor. Removal-Transplant involved two locations--a cornfield 800 feet above sea level and the ocean floor eighteen feet under water--connected by the descending path of the artist's body. For Highway 20, a project he feels is incomplete, Oppenheim spread red dye on the surface of the water following the configuration of the highway that cuts across the northern part of the United States. In Patch, he used fabric to hide an area of coral reef. Also included in the exhibition are strips of film stills from Back Track, a movie Oppenheim made with Anita Thacher at Jones Beach.

The Caribbean projects were made possible by the generosity of the Ziuta and Joseph James Akston Foundation, the Menil Foundation, and Vera List. The material in the exhibition

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is lent by John Gibson Commissions, Inc. The exhibition was directed and installed by Sarah Weiner, Assistant Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Dennis Oppenheim was born in 1938 in Mason City, Washington, and lived in California before coming to New York three years ago. He has since created works in the snow in Maine, in wheatfields in Kansas and the Netherlands, and in an open field outside Milan. In addition to these large outdoor pieces, he has also made "decompositions," reductions of objects such as manhole covers to their basic chemical components.

Peter Hutchinson came to the United States from England in 1953, received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Illinois in 1960, and moved to New York the following year. He had several one-man exhibitions of paintings before concentrating on environmental pieces. Among his recent works are scale models and photomontages of works yet to be executed: using chemicals and organic matter he creates growing and decaying environments inside test tubes. Substituting altitude, longitude and latitude for the height, width, and depth of traditional sculpture, Hutchinson is planning works for the edge of a volcano and a work that floats on an iceberg from Greenland to Nova Scotia.

In 1968, writing in Arts magazine, Peter Hutchinson said:

> "Since this planet became solid there have been constant changes in its surface. Geologic eras, meteoritic assaults, floods, storms and erosion have constantly built up, torn down, pitted, smoothed and otherwise sculpted its face....Artists today are...taking their cues from meteoritic craters and volcanic pits as well as dams, burial mounds, aqueducts, fortifications and moats, to build works that change the surface of the earth. These latest works, however, differ from what went before in that their intent is abstract and intentionally artistic....The connection between agriculture, earthworks, and landscaping is clear. The intelligent use of vegetation in landscape has long been considered an art and often followed ideas taken from paintings. It is only logical that the artist should turn back to the landscape and do it himself in actuality rather than as an illusory plan in a painting..."

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Additional information, photographs and color slides available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212) 956 - 7501.