

MAJOR RICHARD SERRA RETROSPECTIVE AT MoMA SURVEYS 40 YEARS OF SCULPTURE BY ONE OF THE PREEMINENT ARTISTS OF OUR ERA

Exhibition Features Three New Monumental Works on View for the First Time

Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years

June 3–September 10, 2007

The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art Gallery, sixth floor

Contemporary Galleries, second floor (through September 24)

The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden

NEW YORK, May 29, 2007—The Museum of Modern Art presents *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years*, a major retrospective surveying the extraordinary accomplishments of Richard Serra, one of the preeminent artists of our era. This is the most monumental exhibition of sculpture ever presented by the Museum; it highlights the invention and vision of an artist who has radicalized and extended the definition of sculpture. Serra (American, b. 1939) is acclaimed for his challenging and innovative work, which emphasizes process, materials, movement, and an engagement with viewer and site. The exhibition of 27 works is installed throughout the Museum, beginning on the sixth floor with sculpture from the 1960s made of nontraditional materials such as rubber, neon, and lead, and a selection of steel pieces from the 1970s and 1980s. It continues in The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden with large-scale steel works from the 1990s, and it concludes on the second floor with three new monumental steel sculptures from 2006 exhibited for the first time.

MoMA is the only venue for the exhibition, which will be on view from June 3 to September 10; the second-floor Contemporary Galleries on view until September 24. Works in the exhibition are drawn from museum collections, including MoMA's; private lenders; and the collection of the artist. The exhibition is organized by Kynaston McShine, Chief Curator at Large, The Museum of Modern Art, and Lynne Cooke, Curator, Dia Art Foundation.

The Museum of Modern Art's long engagement with the work of Richard Serra began in 1969 when Kynaston McShine included the artist in a group show, followed by inclusion in the benchmark *Information* exhibition in 1970. The Museum acquired its first drawing by Serra in 1973 and its first sculpture, *Equal (Corner Prop Piece)* (1969–70), in 1976. The Museum presented a major exhibition of Serra's sculpture in 1986 and an exhibition of prints, *Richard Serra: The Afangar Icelandic Series*, in 1991–92.

Born in San Francisco in 1939, Serra studied English literature at the University of California, Berkeley, and then at the University of California, Santa Barbara, between 1957 and 1961. He completed graduate study at Yale University's School of Art and Architecture in 1964,

where he was primarily trained as a painter. After spending two years in Paris and Florence, Serra began to work as a sculptor. He entered New York's art world in the mid-1960s and before the end of the decade had shown in several group exhibitions and held a solo exhibition at the Leo Castelli Warehouse. Over the years, Serra expanded the spatial scope of his work and began to focus primarily on large-scale work that demands to be experienced over time, including site-specific works created for particular architectural, urban, or landscape settings. Serra's work is now acclaimed by the contemporary art world and by a wide international public stretching from Iceland to New Zealand.

International Council of The Museum of Modern Art Gallery, sixth floor:

Early Work, 1966–1986

Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years begins with a selection of Serra's early sculptures made in New York in the 1960s. This was an important period of ongoing experimentation for Serra as he incorporated unconventional, industrial materials such as vulcanized, or weatherproof, rubber, neon, and fiberglass into his sculptures and began to focus on the physical act of art making. *Belts* (1966–67), for which he used vulcanized rubber recovered from a warehouse in his neighborhood and neon tubing, departs from the traditional definition of sculpture by presenting these unorthodox materials on the wall.

Serra's early, informal sculptures were succeeded by several works made of lead, a group known as the Prop Pieces—precarious, carefully balanced works that generate a sense of physical tension. The impact of the Prop Pieces, some installed using the wall as support and others freestanding, is generated by the tension between the gravity-dependent elements and the weightiness of the material. *House of Cards (One Ton Prop)* (1969), for instance, comprises four equally balanced plates of lead that total one ton yet convey an almost weightless quality.

Serra also began to work with steel in the early 1970s, possibly influenced by the time he spent working in a steel mill while in college. One of Serra's first major steel pieces, *Circuit II* (1972–86), in MoMA's collection, consists of four hot-rolled steel plates that emerge from the corners of a room, allowing for the viewer to move through the spaces created by the work. Says Serra, "I consider space to be a material. The articulation of space has come to take precedence over other concerns. I attempt to use sculptural form to make space distinct."

The equally bold *Delineator* (1974–75) comprises a large plate of hot-rolled steel installed on the ceiling and an equal-size plate on the floor. The work establishes a dialogue between ceiling and floor, insistently affecting the viewer traveling through the environment. The piece emphasizes movement, not contemplation from a distance, as with traditional sculpture.

The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden: Works from 1992–98

Two examples of Serra's large-scale works from the 1990s—*Intersection II* (1992–93) and *Torqued Ellipse IV* (1999), which are both in the Museum's collection—are featured in The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden. With these works, Serra has further developed ideas first

explored by *Circuit II*, most specifically the idea that the sculptural object is almost entirely supplanted by the experience of new spaces created by the steel object. Serra's purely abstract works invite a distinct interaction with viewers through the experience of walking in and around the sculptures and experiencing the changing environment.

Intersection II is made of four two-inch-thick conical steel plates, each measuring more than 50 feet long and 13 feet high, that set up two flanking paths—one path defined by two plates leaning away from the viewer and the other path by two planes leaning toward the viewer. The result is three distinct, contiguous spaces within a single sculpture.

Torqued Ellipse IV is part of a series in which Serra twisted and tilted his forms until he achieved a form that describes one ellipse at the base and another rotated—rather than aligned—ellipse at the top. The resulting structure wraps around an interior space that may be entered by a gap in its “wall.” *Torqued Ellipse IV* has a form comparable to that of a twisted ribbon standing on its edge, whose top thrusts away from its bottom.

Contemporary Galleries, second floor: New Sculptures, 2006

Three new sculptures all made in 2006—*Band*, *Sequence*, and *Torqued Torus Inversion*—are installed in the Museum's second-floor Contemporary Galleries, which were specially designed to accommodate monumental work such as Serra's. The gallery features 20,000 square feet of open space, reinforced floors, and a gallery wall that can be opened to allow for installation. These three works, all made of two-inch-thick panels of weathered steel, are each approximately 15 feet high and weigh between 100 and 200 tons. They were made at Pickhan Heavy Fabrication in Siegen, Germany.

“It is easy to understand what a torqued torus is if you think about the rim of a bicycle wheel laid on the ground,” explains Serra. “It is basically a form that curves in two directions: it curves in elevation and it curves horizontally.” *Torqued Torus Inversion* consists of two such shapes, one of them inverted, intended to be experienced successively.

Sequence, a 65-foot-long sculpture, is made up of two connected spirals. At both ends, the visitor has the choice of entering through one of two openings—one entrance leads into a finite interior space; the other to a seemingly endless path through the undulating spaces created by the inner and outer steel plates. *Band* reads horizontally and has no distinct interior or exterior. As the continuous band of steel curves inward and outward to the length of over 70 feet, it forms four cavities, all of them different. Serra says that *Band* and *Sequence* “promote movement through form. In both, form appears indeterminate and unpredictable, with constant variations of its surface throughout.”

Film Series

Richard Serra: Five 16mm Films

June 20–September 23, 2007

A selection of 16mm films by Richard Serra will be screened in the Museum's Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters from June 20 through September 23, 2007. Often referred to as "sculptural films," Serra's short films demonstrate the artist's interest in the medium as a means to exploring his early interest in process work. Serra's films challenge existing ideas about sculpture by creating time-based process works that reject the more traditional emphasis on materiality. In addition, the films function as an extension of Serra's *Verb List*, which resulted in the artist creating sculptures directly derived from the listed verbs. Like these works, Serra's films emphasize a single process in lieu of narrative or a more traditional cinematic experience. Prints are from MoMA's Circulating Film and Video Library.

Frame. 1969. USA. 22 minutes.

Hand Catching Lead. 1968. USA. Silent. 3 minutes.

Hands Scraping. 1968. USA. Silent. 3 minutes.

Steelmill/Stahlwerke. 1979. USA. Made with Clara Weyergraf-Serra. 25 minutes.

Railroad Turnbridge. 1976. USA. Silent. 17 minutes.

Program 70 minutes.

Wednesday, June 20, 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, June 23, 4:30 p.m. Titus 2.

More dates to be announced.

#

SPONSORSHIP:

The exhibition is made possible with the major support of LVMH / Moët Hennessy . Louis Vuitton

The Museum acknowledges important grants from Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman, Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, and Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro.

Additional generous funding is provided by The Henry Luce Foundation, Eli and Edythe Broad, The Buckeye Foundation in honor of Eli Broad, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, Keith and Kathy Sachs, Elizabeth and Henry T. Segerstrom, Sue & Edgar Wachenheim Foundation, and Sarah-Ann and Werner H. Kramarsky.

The accompanying publication is made possible by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art. Additional funding is provided by the Dale S. and Norman Mills Leff Publication Fund.

Accommodations generously provided by Millennium Hotels and Resorts.

PUBLICATION:

Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years offers a detailed visual presentation and documentation of his entire career. The book also contains essays on the artist's work by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Lynne Cooke, and John Rajchman, and an interview with Serra by Kynaston McShine, the Museum's Chief Curator at Large. The book is distributed to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson outside North America. It is available at MoMA Stores and online at www.momastore.org. Hardcover: 10.5 x 10 inches; 420 pages; 381 tritone illustrations. \$75. See separate press release for more information. Serra will sign copies of the book on September 6 after his conversation with cocurator Lynne Cooke, which begins at 6:00 p.m. at MoMA.

PROGRAMS:

A variety of programs accompany the exhibition, including a symposium on July 12 that explores the various ways in which New York has been a source of adventure, inspiration, and creativity; a conversation with Lynne Cooke and Richard Serra on September 6; and Brown Bag Lunch lectures on September 17 and 20. See separate press release for more information.

MoMA AUDIO:

Listen to Richard Serra speak about his diverse body of work—from his early experiments with a variety of materials to his recent monumental steel sculptures. The audio program is available at the Museum free of charge, courtesy of Bloomberg, and as an enhanced podcast on www.moma.org/audio. Available in English only.

WEB SITE:

The *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years* Web site, www.moma.org/serra, features images of works from the exhibition complemented by excerpts from a conversation between Richard Serra and Kynaston McShine, audio commentary by the artist, a video walk-through of the exhibition, and a chronology.

No. 49

Press Contact: Daniela Stigh, 212-708-9747, daniela_stigh@moma.org

For high-resolution images, visit our online press office Web site: www.moma.org/press. Please call or email for username and password.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.*
Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

***The Museum will be open until 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays in July and August**

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)
Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org