The Event of Art
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The Art Committee of the Richard Meier Grand Army Plaza Building
I mentioned above I had decided, not unlike with my films, to have a show of the new works, at my 125-year-old brownstone home in Brooklyn. It was titled *In What Language to Come* which I write about above. Jeannie Weissglass, an artist and gallerist, came to the opening. It was an excellent time. I asked Jeannie about her contact at Gallery 1 in the Richard Meier building at Grand Army Plaza, and she put in touch with Suzy Spence, the curator, who asked to see images of the work.

I sent here a PDF and she writes,

The presentation of your work went well, and we’re interested in seeing it in person / the group art committee of about 5 members for consideration of a show in January.

With that, she asked to bring the building’s art committee for a visit in early September.

A note here on Richard Meier On Prospect Park, The Gallery at 1GAP:

In 2009, a private collector conceived of a gallery space for fellow residents of the Richard Meier building in Brooklyn, On Prospect Park. Through the formation of an Art Committee, his vision developed into a participatory in-house art program. By mounting three large exhibitions a year, funded by the residents of the building, this unusual non-profit features the work of contemporary New York City artists. Exhibitions fill a series of rooms in the building’s common areas on the ground floor, visible at street level from outside. For the curious passerby, a walk by the glass facades of the building reveals a full view of the dynamic conversation between Meier’s architectural
design, the contemporary art on view, and the vibrant city and park life just beyond the glass.

The Gallery at 1GAP engages with an extended community of art enthusiasts by opening its doors for artist receptions, artist conversations, and special events, with the goal of contributing to the creative culture and energy of Brooklyn.

The gallery does three solo shows a year, each lasting four months.

So early September came, and I prepared the studio. The gallery committee consisted of eight people. Before I took them to the main room, I invited them upstairs for coffee and pastries, as I wanted to get a sense of them and go slowly. Over time I began to get a sense of each one of them, and the various things that interested them. That alone was quite enjoyable. After about 45 minutes or an hour, my sense was that they had much enjoyment and enthusiasm for the work.

The Meier art committee visit goes well and later that day I am invited to do a show. With the invitation of the Meier art committee for the show I spend time looking at the building and meet Suzy and the board to see the space.
Three large rooms and windows — 4000 square feet on the bottom floor, that’s the space that I am given to work with.

It's a lot — a lot of space, and spaces, a white cube filled with light not unlike the museum spaces Richard Meier has built. It’s a gallery space as well as a social space, and this intrigues me. Should I do another of my billboards as I did for Shenzhen or in Shanghai? As you can see above, they have seen all this new work and want this work. And I am curious how the work will inhabits the Meier space.

Space as Exhibition

What kind of subject - what kind of art for a pure and dehistoricized space for a transhistorical subject.

I think its accurate, using the language in Benjamin Buchloh’s on Thomas Hirschhorn,
Language equally accurate to describe contemporary white cube museum and gallery spaces. Meier in fact has designed the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, The High Museum, and The Arp Museum, along with his portfolio of living spaces that he has designed worldwide such as the Meier at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, New York.

On the left edge of this aerial photograph about three-quarters of the way down is the Meier building. The building is set off of the circle of Grand Army Plaza, which was designed to open onto Prospect Park. Originally the grounds of the Grand Army Plaza was the site of the Battle of Long Island, the first battle of the American Revolution.
The Meier space again—“a pure and dehistoricized space for the embodiment of transhistorical subjects” seems to want to have no memory, or to be clear, clean, and pure. There is something of this in the space, a container of light that I very much like. At the same time, there is a multi-generational response to form itself, taking its cues from the Mies van der Rohe.

The Barcelona Pavilion, an emblematic work of the Modern Movement, has been exhaustively studied and interpreted as well as having inspired the oeuvre of several generations of architects including Richard Meier. Mies van der Rohe’s originality in the use of materials lay not so much in novelty as in the ideal of modernity they expressed through the rigour of their geometry, the precision of the pieces and the clarity of their assembly.

http://miesbcn.com/the-pavilion/

This rigour of geometry and form, hall marks of modernity are precisely what comes into question in the sculptural practices from Pop Art to Post-Minimal sculpture, from ready made iconicity to phenomenological anti-form and the abstractions of process- and structure- determined practices.

From the moment of Fluxus and Pop (e.g. Claes Oldenburg, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Whitman) in the late Fifties and early Sixties to figures such as Michael Asher and Dan Graham at the end of that decade, approaches to sculpture asked specific questions about its sites and situations in the remnants of the former public sphere. Yet these artists were not merely involved in a critique of the discourses of exhibitions and the museum institution, but they actually contemplated the collective conditions governing the experience of objects and spaces under the visual regimes of late capitalism.

Benjamin Buchloh, *Detritus and Decrepitude: The Sculpture of Thomas Hirschhorn*
These issues that sculptors and sculpture has dealt with in response to modernity concerned me obliquely before the Meier show, as I had never expressed directly my interest in objects as situations, as events, as theatre; or the becoming object, or notional objects; layering and dispersion; precarity. These, as issues or approaches, stood against or contested the modern and its rationality. I proceeded with the object-situation as a given more and more in the works of *In What Language to Come*. Concerns of form and objecthood, apart from being within an ensemble of issues of space, embodiment, reception, and site specificity, became more intriguing for me.

The occasion of the Richard Meier building show has me quite taken with the realm of forms, this something new and distinct from formats, be they software or social formats. It is not just forms complete unto themselves if such a thing can be but also the form and its simultaneous disassembly and contestation.

Influenced by Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, Mies van der Rohe, Luis Barragán, Meier creates rational modernist forms with abundant natural light. Key to it all: the color white.

White is the ephemeral emblem of perpetual movement. White is always present but never the same, bright and rolling in the day, silver and effervescent under the full moon of New Year’s Eve. Between the sea of consciousness and earth’s vast materiality lies this ever-changing line of white. White is the light, the medium of understanding and transformative power..... If it is true that Ludwig Mies van der Rohe once said, “God is in the details,” it might be possible to say of Richard Meier’s architecture that God is in the numbers. More than any other contemporary architect, Meier has imposed a style that is almost invariably driven by grids and precisely calculated proportions.

[https://archcritik.wordpress.com/2015/08/18/richard-meier/](https://archcritik.wordpress.com/2015/08/18/richard-meier/)

Time: Opening reception, 2 p.m.–4 p.m.; Monday–Friday, 1 p.m.–6 p.m. or by appointment

—Sarah Cascone

Sunday, April 29–Wednesday, September 5

Installation composite of Marc Lafia’s “Making Sense.” Courtesy of the artist.

17. “Marc Lafia: Making Sense (http://spenceprojects.com/inner/lafia.html)” at 1GAP Gallery

At first, Lafia’s new exhibition looks like a sharp left turn from his previous work, which leveraged new media and interactive elements to foreground the ways in which digital culture alters our physical and mental self-conception. His latest body of work instead comes about through old-fashioned assemblage.
'The great buildings of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe are often thought of as temples of reason, odes to a pure and rational system of architecture. It was Mies, after all, who sought a universal Modernist style of absolute rigor and austerity, who struggled to boil architecture down to its essences.

The glass boxes that now sit with a thud in the midst of virtually every downtown are buildings designed by architects who saw the rational side of Mies and failed to understand the poetic one, who could not comprehend that what Mies considered simple and what real-estate developers considered simple were very different things.

Richard Meier, Mies Van der Rohe and the purported all too clean transhistorical subject

We would be mistaken then to think of the work of Mies Van der Rohe as a clean, orderly and planar screen, a new surface, an architecture degree zero the once hard clean edge of the silver screen, now the computational screen that once reflected the image, in augmented or virtual reality, the dream of rationally, just like it was in cinema continues to be emotive, excessive, noisy, a passing or emittance of the sensual, the transitory, the appetite.

The BBC reports on the statue,

This dreamlike sensation was reinforced by the fact that there was nothing to see inside beyond the architecture itself, save for a single sculpture of a female nude – Alba, or Dawn, by the German artist George Kolbe – and the architect’s new leather and chrome steel Barcelona chairs.

http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130924-less-is-more-a-design-classic
I like these two images together, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Barcelona Pavillion and a performance at EAT.

And this from The Guardian,

The history of art and technology is a history of envy. The rival fields – famously characterised as Two Cultures by CP Snow – have long challenged, borrowed or stolen from each other. Each wants what the other has. Art desires technology’s seeming omnipotence, its cold power, its cutting-edge materials and processes; technology wants art’s creativity, its free thinking, its radical innovation. And yet in spite – or because – of this fraught relationship, art and technology have converged in many ways, whether in competition or collusion.

The open, variable, and iterative, the mutable, transposable, contextual, the score that is indeed a line of flight, the instruction set, the notational, chance, these notions changed forever sculpture and our sense of objects and presence.

Yet the emotive, wherein to dampen, or turn up, the register of the sensual and sensate is provence of the arts.

To “contest this architecture outright as a hegemonic ordering of spatial experience”

At the same time I am roused and piqued to ‘contest this architecture outright as a hegemonic ordering of spatial experience’. Why? Consider the site of the building of the plaza and ovoid that leads into the Prospect Park. Whereas Frederic Olmsted, designed space for an urban public greatly in need of open city space and a city receptive to such an effort, after 9.11 and the global war on terror, public space today in New York and other cities is highly policed and surveilled.

Ideas here include

¶ a pop up rehab center in the lobby
¶ put inside the floor to ceiling windows chain link fence
¶ put surveillance cameras everywhere possible in and around the building and have them play stacks of monitor to occlude viewing.

and why do this, some punk, antiauthoritarian gesture, some messianic calling for the end of time, some resentment against the perfectly ordered, the sterile, the clean.

As asked “Why has white been such a presence in your work?,” Richard Meier answers,

Whiteness allows the architectural ideas to be understood most clearly—the difference between opacity and transparency, solid and void, structure and surface. These things are more perceptible in a white environment. They have a greater clarity.

As opposed to this ‘clarity’, foundational to me was William Burroughs, the cut-up, chance, appropriation, surprised recognition, the body, Cage and silence, the given, what’s around, post colonial theory and philosophy, you might say, all of it post psychedelic, or rather, open, permeable, transitory, messy, dirty, fucked up.