NANCY RUBINS: Works for New Space, Stainless Steel, Aluminum, Monochrome I & II

Thursday, June 3 – Friday, September 3, 2010

We all have some history with boats, whether our grandparents came over that way or whether we used them as kids. The canoe, for example, is such a simple form, an ancient form. And it’s 100 percent figurative, designed around the human figure.

--Nancy Rubins

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce “Works for New Space, Stainless Steel, Aluminum, Monochrome I & II,” Nancy Rubins’ first exhibition in Los Angeles since 2001. The exhibition features two new sculptures, which were assembled on site at the gallery.

A pre-eminent American sculptor, Rubins takes used or discarded industrial materials and objects and transforms them into monumental sculptures whose scale and forceful presence have an overwhelming physical impact. Rubins acts as an intermediary between the past and future states of her chosen materials, crafting them into sculptures while maintaining the discrete identities of their constituents. Her work incorporates objects of consumer culture that sometimes retain visible identifying logos, however she is most interested in their formal qualities and spatial potential than their brand. Her arrangements evoke a precarious equilibrium of objects in space, citing both the traditions of modernist American monumental sculpture as well as bricolage, which emphasize the aesthetic possibilities of quotidian objects. Using these diverse precedents as her foundations, she produces sculptures that brim with the entropic energies and forces of nature.

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Boats entered Rubins' sculptural vocabulary in 2000, which she chose for their lightness, mobility, and dynamic structure, as well as their iconographical import. Two massive sculptures, *Work for New Space, Stainless Steel, Aluminum, Monochrome I & II*, are made up of a variety of used aluminum boats including canoes, insta-boats, jon boats, and rowboats. In both, wire cable connects the boats to each other and to the steel armature, forming a weblike structure of compression and tension that recalls Buckminster Fuller's notion of "tensegrity," where the whole is stronger than the parts. The seemingly monochromatic metal sculptures reveal a subtle yet rich patination on closer examination, from the dents and scrapes of incidental damage to stenciled serial numbers. In a nod to Brancusi that conflates *Bird in Space* with *Endless Column*, they rise away from the floor, cantilevering toward each other in mid-flight.


Nancy Rubins lives and works in Topanga Canyon, California.

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