

Albus Greenspon presents an exhibition of sculpture and works on paper by Bill Bollinger.

Bill Bollinger is one of the most dauntingly obscure artists of the 1960s and 70s. Although included in many of the most important exhibitions of the period, the transient nature of much of his work and his decision to leave New York City in the early 1970s, followed by personal difficulties and an early death—at 48—in 1988 has left a reputation cosseted largely by anecdote.

Over the past 12 years the determination of several individuals committed to restoring the artist's place in history has seen realization in the Bollinger retrospective opening at the Sculpture Center on April 22, 2012. While this retrospective focuses on the years 1966–1970 when the artist was showing widely in New York and Europe, the exhibition at Albus Greenspon extends the retrospective's time line showing—in addition to an early aluminum channel piece, one of only four known to exist—several massive cast iron works from 1973 and Polaroid documentation and drawings from 1977 illustrating Bollinger's reemerging interest in painting, an interest which continued until the artist's death.

In the late 1960s anti-form and process art were radical post-minimalist alternatives that allowed direct engagement with materials even as conceptualism and performance art were dispensing with objects altogether. Such work avoided the academic tendencies of conceptual art while providing an equivocally straightforward experience of the phenomenal world. Anti-form was a reaction to the increasingly fussy synthetic formalism of minimalism and color field painting, a reaction that was particularly countercultural in being intellectual and romantic, experiential and elusive.

The watershed moment of anti-form was a 1968 show curated at the Castelli warehouse by Robert Morris, 9 at Leo Castelli. Bill Bollinger was included in this show as were Eva Hesse, Bruce Nauman and Richard Serra, among others. The Castelli show was followed in 1969 by *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* at the Whitney Museum curated by Marcia Tucker and James Monte and Harold Szeeman's legendary *When Attitudes Become Form* (also 1969) in Germany. Interestingly, not one painter was included in any of these shows, even though Robert Morris cites Jackson Pollock as forebear ("Anti-Form," *Artforum*, April, 1968).

The cast iron sculptures being shown here were made in 1973 and comprised Bollinger's last New York exhibition at OK Harris in 1974. These large solid iron pours were cast in sand gouged out to loosely follow the contours of Northeastern lakes Bollinger had frequented. The process resulted in complex three-dimensional forms, topped by the level fluid surfaces that had become a preoccupation of the artist following a 1968 ocean voyage to Europe. Once solidified and removed

from the mold, the sculpture's defining horizontal plane could be displaced according to the topology of its underlying form.

These cast iron pieces are a significant reimagining and summation of themes that had informed the artist's work up to this point: veracity to material, gravity, fluid definition of form, displacement, edge and monumentality. Interestingly, this work was undertaken in chapfallen response to Bollinger realization that the large-scale bronze sculptures of Henry Moore possessed disingenuously thin metal surfaces surrounding an echoing empty void. Appalled, Bollinger cast the iron works, in part, as an exposé of the illusion of solidity and weight flaunted by traditional, monumental cast metal sculpture.

Bill Bollinger (1939–1988) was born on Long Island, NY and attended Brown University, receiving a degree in aeronautical engineering, a background that informs his art. Beginning in 1966 Bollinger exhibited at the Bianchini and Bykert Galleries, Rolf Ricke in Cologne, and in the early 1970s at OK Harris. He was the elusive subject of a revelatory article in *Art in America* by Wade Saunders that is instrumental in laying the groundwork for Bollinger's revival ("Not Lost, Not Found", March, 2000).

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