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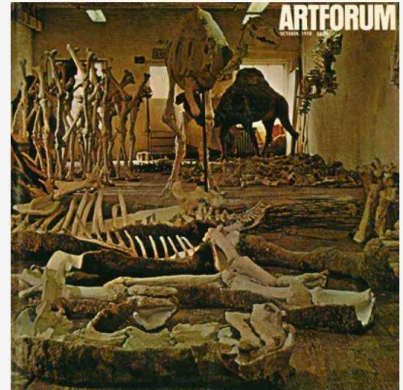
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**Nancy GRAVES**

*Artforum,*

*A CONVERSATION WITH NANCY GRAVES*

*October 1970*



Nancy Graves, *Studio, March, 1970*.

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## A CONVERSATION WITH NANCY GRAVES

By Emily Wasserman

SHARE



**CERTAIN NOTIONS OF PRIMITIVE** religion and the origins of art are pertinent to a consideration of Nancy Graves' thinking. The development of her work attempts to focus away from a traditionally Western, analytical logic of form, and to lead back toward the pre-logical and archaeological sources of conceiving, perceiving and making. Among the early hunting cultures, art arose specifically from the links between finding and making. The most archaic cave paintings from Lascaux and Altamira are intimately related to the actual contours of the rock walls on which they are painted. Conceptually, they stem from the need to encourage success in hunting—that is, from coercive magic. This reveals the fundamental difference between *representation* as a purely naturalistic, “matching” attempt (a post-Medieval and Western attitude about art forms) and *symbolizing*, within a context where the pictures of animals are not *imitations* of the real world, but *fractions of its vital substance*, as potent as the whole thing or being itself. The shadow (*i.e.*, the drawing, carving, or painting) was seen as a physical manifestation of a spiritual body. Its reiteration and appearance made the secret world of sacred myths, rites, and spirits *effective* and *active* in terms of “profane” or everyday life-values and events. The repetition of such designs—increasingly abstracted as ceremonial and secular, sacred and profane art forms came to be intermingled—on weapons, implements, ornaments and costumes or bodies, meant a constant and conscious contact with this magical and spiritual sphere.

The primitive's idea that the part has the same efficacy as the whole is a concept which Miss Graves has incorporated into her demonstration of modern psychological and visual theories about the *gestalt* image as a perceivable whole. Her concern with the relationships obtained between "inside" and "outside" also relate to a special style of art practiced widely among archaic and more developed hunting cultures (such as the Australian Aborigines, Siberians, Alaskans, and North West Coast Indians) whose religious life revolved around the phenomenon of Shamanism, a technique of controlled ecstasy. Called the "X-Ray" or "Anatomical" style, it shows both the inside parts and the outside skins of animals, within the same field or framework. The primitive's interest in the interior anatomy is understandable in both a totemic and an economic sense, since the animals depicted are often those which are hunted for food, and the art is produced in the context of magical increase rites aimed at enlarging the food supply (*e.g.* Australia). In reference to Shamanistic conceptions, the "X-Ray" style denotes a phase of the shaman's initiation (he is a special type of psychological medicine man) in which a psychic death and rebirth cycle is seen in terms of physical dissection and reconstitution. The skeletal state through which he must pass in order to return to conscious life, endows him with a new power to operate as an effective shaman in relation to his community.

Recently, the specifically sculptural problem of static form came up in several pieces. The issue of kinetic time as an extension of that sculpture was dealt with in a ten minute long film of a camel market, directed by Miss Graves and filmed by Robert Fiore in Goulmime, Morocco. Another, longer version is currently in production. In the shorter film, a variety of movements and activities were picked out. Shots of bartering, tying up the animals, of the jagged motions of their legs, their cud-chewing jaws and fluidly bobbing necks, were interwoven with a fabric of sounds—bells, chattering, the groans of the camels, music, the cries of the herders (“hup-hup”), etc.—thus again looking into the inter-relationships of parts to whole, in a broadened context of time and space, and pictorial movement. A number of pieces executed in Germany during July, 1970, took the forms of the sculpture further along the path of abstraction, while still utilizing the organic and animal forms already familiar in Miss Graves’ work.

Using the specific starting point of the camel’s full exterior appearance (from 1967 to 1969) replicated in all of its forms and species, issues basic to sculpture were successively explored. Problems of variability, process, distribution of part to whole, reflection, reproduction and repetition, positive-negative spatial and solid relationships, levity and weight, have all been integral to this exploration. She acknowledges a certain debt to Claes Oldenburg’s giant soft forms, as a precedent for her work with the fur-covered, life-sized camels. The sculptural thinking of other contemporaries also informs many of her decisions. Attitudes, for example, about the situational positioning of her work (“to cast,” “to hang,” “to cluster,” “to clutter”) derive from concerns integral to much current work, although when brought to bear upon such a completely unique vehicle these tend to be obscured behind the sheer physical impact of the work itself.

When I started working with the camel as a form, I saw that it had implications that would allow me to work *out* of it, however my work was directed.

*Could the starting point have been an elephant, as well?*

No

*Why?*

An elephant is not that possible, it's too massive; there's enough that's bizarre about the camel to allow for it as a sculpture problem. And then it leads into history also.

*What kind of history?*

The camel is a pre-historic form from North America. You have to start somewhere, so therefore, from an exterior form, the alternative was its opposite—the interior—and that's a much greater abstraction.

*Emile Durkheim's The Elementary Forms of Religious Life and (A.P.) Elkin's The Australian Aborigines interested you for that reason?*

Right, and all of that is inter-related.

*It's as if you were exploring a whole archaic culture and its remains . . . which went back fifty million years.*

In order to make these pieces, I have to have some kind of specific relationship to them. I did go to Los Angeles to check out the Pleistocene forms from the tar pits adjacent to the L.A. County Museum. I try to be very specific about the visual history. I try to make a departure from that, within the area of abstraction.

One of the reasons I made the *Taxidermy Form* was that it was meaningful in terms of problems raised by earlier work: "Is it real, or could a taxidermist have done it, and therefore, why bother?" Here, I considered the *inside* of the taxidermy piece, which is the mold-for-the-process-of-making-the-mold. I attempted to translate this form in as many ways as possible, into a sculpture situation. The base, which is no longer a problem, is attached to a pole at a fulcrum point. Each part is interdependent: that is, detachable, and moves interdependently. What is defined is the *rod as armature*, the function of a base, and the process of what it is to make a cast in terms of that specific form. This is then equated to the whole: "inside/outside," with the rod as support. The rod exists *in* the bones, and the rod lies *outside* the bones also; when it is in the bones, it is sculpture, when it is outside, it functions as armature. Outside, there is a relation to osteology. The process of dangling and/or bobbing here, is the beginning of that interest in "levity," which then allowed for the hanging pieces later. In *Vertebral Column with Skull and Pelvis* I also deal with the problem of casting as an allusion to another medium, and make something which, in its own right, is sculpture.

*The work seems to derive from itself somehow; did anything else lead you to those particular historical or formal concerns?*

The Museum of Natural History in Florence, Italy (where I lived and worked during 1966) contains the wax-works of an 18th-century anatomist, named Susini. What I saw there was a man whose total obsession was circumscribed within a very academic situation. That is, he was trying to define human anatomy in terms of drawings, and their reproduction in wax. The results were art, even in terms of that socio-historical period, although they were not recognized as such—they were not just copied cadavers. Visually, it's the most emphatic thing—the attempt to be rigorous about whatever the problem was, was much more thorough and complete than most artists usually are. I could relate the various anatomical forms to the work of Claes Oldenburg. The significance of this for me was that Susini had produced a complex body of work from a single point of origin.

*Did you have any inkling that those “soft form” camels which looked back to Susini's work (or sideways at Oldenburg's) would lead you to the abstract hanging pieces?*

Having done a lot of “art-making,” I know what to avoid. This, to me, is not like what I see when I walk up and down Madison Avenue, and yet it couldn't have been made if I were not aware of all that. I have to keep an awareness of this in my own terms. Many artists work out of each other and gratefully acknowledge it. Once one acknowledges one's references, one tries to deny them, in another sense. It seems to me the only way to do that is to find another structure, another way of thinking, which doesn't allow for Western rationality. I really believe that that is the problem right now. One who keeps to that [Western] form is going to be trapped by it. So I would like to try to find another way.

*What about these floor pieces—how do they relate to that alternative way of thinking or working?*

Most floor pieces which I have made have to do with similar forms, in some way varied. The form itself is very simplistic, so that one can immediately find some access to the *gestalt*. In the first floor pieces I was concerned with the concept of “mirage”—which led me to the idea of reflections. How the mind receives visual material and observes it: this can never be read as a whole—but as an idea, a presence, and here, an extension in a certain direction relative to the floor.



*Is this the piece called Fossils Incorrectly Located?*

Yes. It was an early piece, but it was a departure I made from the camel skeletons. After its completion, I realized that it was more complex than any other floor piece. I tried to analyze why, and it seemed that the reason was because the forms are never reducible to a *singular* whole, but can only be perceived in terms of partite groupings. That refers to Ehrenzweig's terminology for one's haptic responses—the pre-cognitive and non-rational. You can absorb the whole, but you can't define it in terms of something rational. I tried to bring this out with my own work.

When I was making the film (*Goulimime*, 1970, a ten-minute film of a Moroccan camel market) I was also concerned with the problem of equating movement to a physical, static situation, in the piece called *Variability of Similar Forms*, made up of thirty-six leg units. It was a reverse of the movie situation; as one passes by the multiple static units of the sculpture, the overall form constantly changes.

*Whereas, in the movie, the camera passes by the forms, and the film itself defines the movement. With the sculpture, the viewer is providing the movement, outside of those separate, but grouped forms.*

Yes. . . . Futurism and Cubism were both two- dimensional and static painterly forms, for the most part. Here, the form of the leg images is relative to the positioning of the observer.

*Meanwhile, during the time you were doing these “inside/outside” bone pieces, you were already thinking about the hanging pieces—you were ahead of yourself by a few months?*

Yes. In the *Hair-Bone Piece* which I did in Germany during July, each of the fifty units will be approximately ten feet tall, and physically, they will appear as something in between the thirty-six unit leg piece (*Variability of Similar Forms*) and the *Shadow-Reflections with Sun-Disks*.

I'm interested now in the problem of “levity”; that is, a lot of these pieces move independently. They have a fulcrum, and yet it appears that they should weigh a great deal. Each part is free-moving. Even in the *Taxidermy Piece*, every point moves relative to a fulcrum.

*When I was last here at the studio, you were talking about those pieces (Hanging Vertical Wire Piece, and Skin Bisected; Shadow Reflection), and you also mentioned mnemonic imagery. . . .*

There is an aluminum wire piece (*Hanging Mnemonic Wire Piece*) which I haven't completed, and don't know whether I can be successful about it. It is *an idea that is only known to one person*, therefore, to me it is a reflection piece. Every time there is a loop in the wire, that's a point of departure, but only for the "knower of the form." But the difficulty is that the problem must be visual, and it may not have achieved that clearly.

*Well, that is a quality of all symbols—mandalas, Tantric yantra diagrams, etc.—that they can only be understood if you happen to comprehend what that particular body of knowledge or religion is about.*

Yes, and that interests me also. *The Obviation of Similar Forms* is, again, an "inside/outside" piece. And it's a positive/negative situation as well. The "pluses" support the "minuses." If a form is repeated in a static and close enough confined situation, it becomes impossible to *see* it. The result is the *gestalt*; having departed from there, I came back to it.

*Despite the gestalt, when you look at the piece, you do see all the different parts. . . .*

But the fact remains that the separate forms are varied, yet all are of a like species—leg bones. *Calipers* in a visual context should be related to the *Fossils Incorrectly Located*—if you're talking about the bones—this is the "bones of the bones!" Because the ideas are more complex than the visual explication, it's unsatisfactory, however. Each caliper is the measurement of the spaces within the *Pleistocene Skeleton*. They measure both the negative and positive spaces, and when placed on the floor, each rod rusts to form its own shadow. When the corrosion separates, it is then a kind of residual cast, or a shadow.

*You mean that once the rods are on the floor, they measure only each other?*

Yes. When you remove a caliper from its source, what remains is the measurement; the rod becomes the "positive," while the spaces between them are "negative."

*Why is the measurement considered "negative?"*

It's another way of perceiving the physical fact of that situation. You're right back with the "bones of the bones" again!



*Cast Shadow Reflecting Itself From Four Sides* followed *Obviation of Similar Forms*. Each of these units is visually and spatially interdependent. The piece extends from floor to ceiling, and is another “inside/outside” situation.

*In that other shadow/reflection piece (Shadow-Reflections with Sun-Disks) the units are bone-like, but also feathery. They remind me of the war standards decorated with feathers on a long pole, carried along with battle shields and weapons by some American Indian tribes.*

Yes, that’s in there; but I didn’t consciously make that translation. The piece is made of 2 steel rings, each with eighteen hanging units formed with gauze and a wax adhesion. I did want to make something which was that *light*, each unit being interdependent. I was also interested in the circle—sun-disk—as it related to the American Indian.

*What is that group of animal skin strips hanging from the ceiling?*

That’s a *Totem with Shadows*. The idea of a totem incorporates its own “shadow”—the man and his totem are one and the same (in name, in life context, in spirit). Additionally, there are shadows of the forms themselves, the animal skins and parts, in complementary colors (orange skins/blue shadows).

*It’s certainly like a fetish, or other such talisman. . . .*

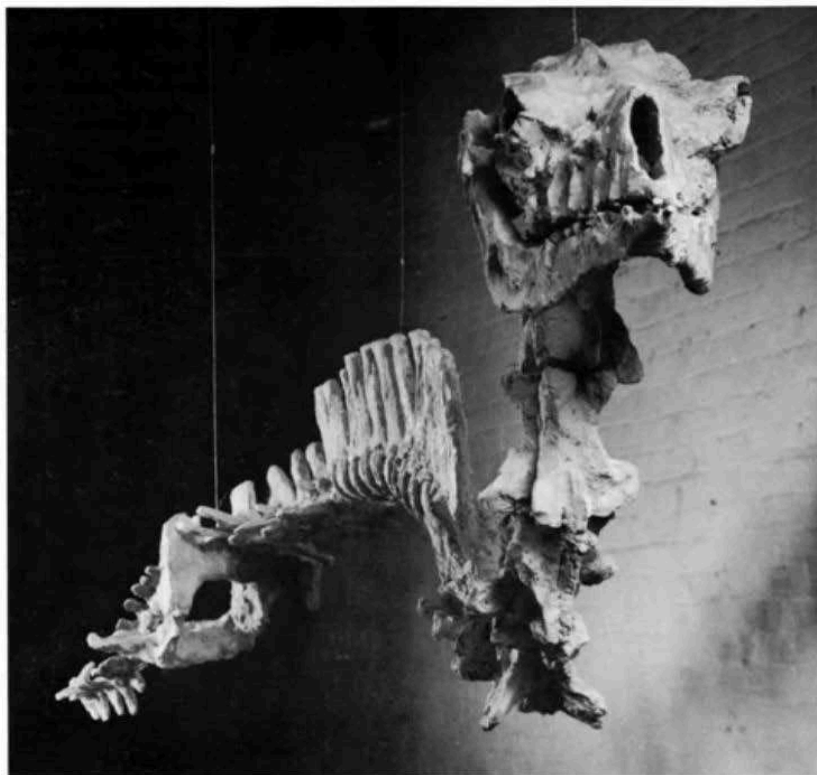
That’s as far as it can go, it seems, in terms of the literalness. This is an additional way of dissecting the same forms.

*Traditionally, small fetishes were worn around the neck, or carried in a pouch, but here, suddenly it’s giant, so it is scary.*

There’s another similar piece where a spike penetrates a camel’s head, which has a beatific expression on its face—it is impaled eight feet above the floor. It’s very primitive, but it’s also very pastoral.

—Emily Wasserman

## A CONVERSATION WITH NANCY GRAVES



*Vertebral Column with Skull and Pelvis, 1970, 10' x 4' x 2 1/2', steel, wax, modeling paste, acrylic. "Hanging (to hang) is one of the ways to isolate free-moving forms and raise them off the floor . . . the source of the 'levity' which led to the more abstract hanging pieces. . . ."*

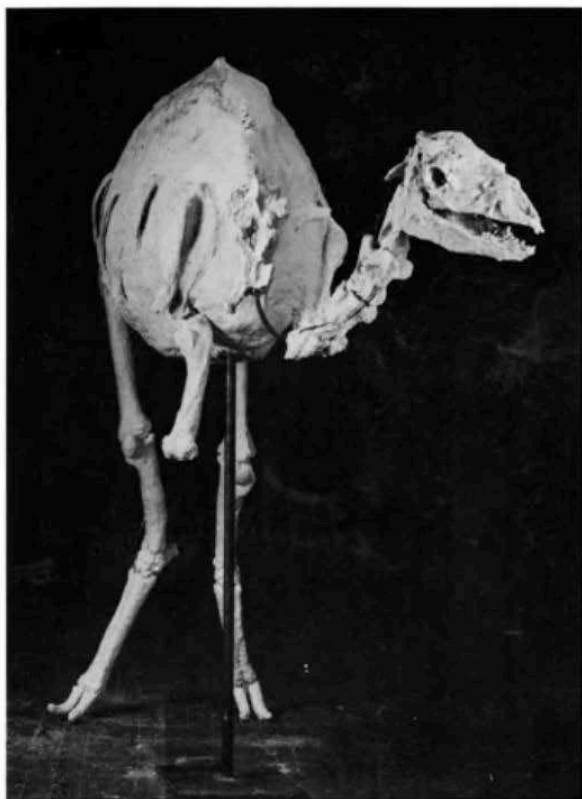
EMILY WASSERMAN

Certain notions of primitive religion and the origins of art are pertinent to a consideration of Nancy Graves' thinking. The development of her work attempts to focus away from a traditionally Western, analytical logic of form, and to lead back toward the pre-logical and archaeological sources of conceiving, perceiving and making. Among the early hunting cultures, art arose specifically from the links between finding and making. The most archaic cave paintings from Lascaux and Altamira are intimately related to the actual contours of the rock walls on which they are painted. Conceptually, they stem from the need to encourage success in hunting—that is, from coercive magic. This reveals the fundamental difference between *representation* as a purely naturalistic, "matching" attempt (a post-

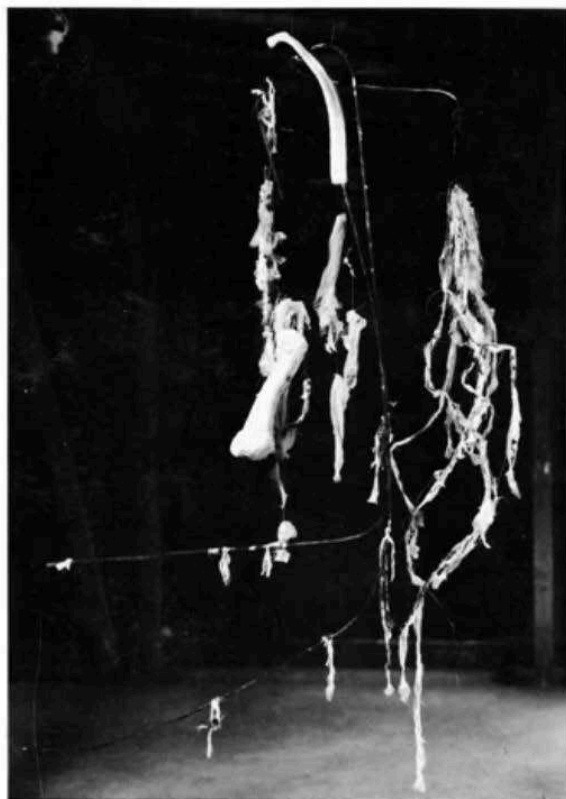
Medieval and Western attitude about art forms) and symbolizing, within a context where the pictures of animals are not *imitations* of the real world, but *fractions of its vital substance*, as potent as the whole thing or being itself. The shadow (*i.e.*, the drawing, carving, or painting) was seen as a physical manifestation of a spiritual body. Its reiteration and appearance made the secret world of sacred myths, rites, and spirits effective and active in terms of "profane" or everyday life-values and events. The repetition of such designs—increasingly abstracted as ceremonial and secular, sacred and profane art forms came to be intermingled—on weapons, implements, ornaments and costumes or bodies, meant a constant and conscious contact with this magical and spiritual sphere.

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efficacy as the whole is a concept which Miss Graves has incorporated into her demonstration of modern psychological and visual theories about the gestalt image as a perceivable whole. Her concern with the relationships obtained between "inside" and "outside" also relate to a special style of art practiced widely among archaic and more developed hunting cultures (such as the Australian Aborigines, Siberians, Alaskans, and North West Coast Indians) whose religious life revolved around the phenomenon of Shamanism, a technique of controlled ecstasy. Called the "X-Ray" or "Anatomical" style, it shows both the inside parts and the outside skins of animals, within the same field or framework. The primitive's interest in the interior anatomy is understandable in both a totemic and an economic sense, since the animals depicted are often those which are hunted for



*Taxidermy Form*, December, 1969, steel, wood, wax, marble dust, acrylic. The mold-for-the-process-of-making-the-mold... translated into a sculptural situation, each part interdependent... defining what the rod is, as armature, as base, as support.



*Bone-Finger*, July, 1970, 8' x 4' x 1'. Nylon thread, gauze, rods, acrylic, masking tape. Nylon thread extends to floor, and armature rotates 360 degrees while gauze acts as a wind propellant. The rod-bone structure serves as an armature and the gauze equivocates the notion of a residual shadow.

food, and the art is produced in the context of magical increase rites aimed at enlarging the food supply (e.g. Australia). In reference to Shamanistic conceptions, the "X-Ray" style denotes a phase of the shaman's initiation (he is a special type of psychological medicine man) in which a psychic death and rebirth cycle is seen in terms of physical dissection and reconstitution. The skeletal state through which he must pass in order to return to conscious life, endows him with a new power to operate as an effective shaman in relation to his community.

Recently, the specifically sculptural problem of static form came up in several pieces. The issue of kinetic time as an extension of that sculpture was dealt with in a ten minute long film of a camel market, directed by Miss Graves and filmed by Robert Fiore in Goulmim, Morocco. Another,

longer version is currently in production. In the shorter film, a variety of movements and activities were picked out. Shots of bartering, tying up the animals, of the jagged motions of their legs, their cud-chewing jaws and fluidly bobbing necks, were interwoven with a fabric of sounds—bells, chattering, the groans of the camels, music, the cries of the herders ("hup-hup"), etc.—thus again looking into the inter-relationships of parts to whole, in a broadened context of time and space, and pictorial movement. A number of pieces executed in Germany during July, 1970, took the forms of the sculpture further along the path of abstraction, while still utilizing the organic and animal forms already familiar in Miss Graves' work.

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licated in all of its forms and species, issues basic to sculpture were successively explored. Problems of variability, process, distribution of part to whole, reflection, reproduction and repetition, positive-negative spatial and solid relationships, levity and weight, have all been integral to this exploration. She acknowledges a certain debt to Claes Oldenburg's giant soft forms, as a precedent for her work with the fur-covered, life-sized camels. The sculptural thinking of other contemporaries also informs many of her decisions. Attitudes, for example, about the situational positioning of her work ("to cast," "to hang," "to cluster," "to clutter") derive from concerns integral to much current work, although when brought to bear upon such a completely unique vehicle these tend to be obscured behind the sheer physical impact of the work itself.

When I started working with the camel as a form, I saw that it had implications that would allow me to work out of it, however my work was directed.

Could the starting point have been an elephant, as well?

No.

Why?

An elephant is not that possible, it's too massive; there's enough that's bizarre about the camel to allow for it as a sculpture problem. And then it leads into history also.

What kind of history?

The camel is a pre-historic form from North America. You have to start somewhere, so therefore, from an exterior form, the alternative was its opposite—the interior—and that's a much greater abstraction.

Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* and (A.P.) Elkin's *The Australian Aborigines* interested you for that reason?

Right, and all of that is inter-related.

It's as if you were exploring a whole archaic culture and its remains . . .

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In order to make these pieces, I have to have some kind of specific relationship to them. I did go to Los Angeles to check out the Pleistocene forms from the tar pits adjacent to the L.A. County Museum. I try to be very specific about the visual history. I try to make a departure from that, within the area of abstraction.

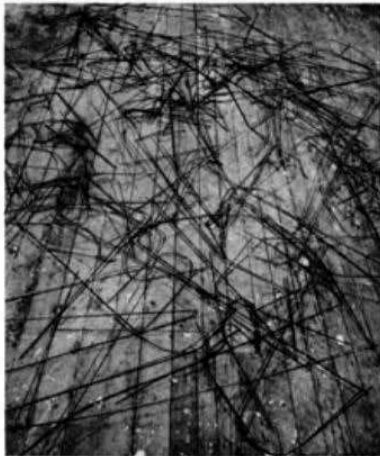
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*Column with Skull and Pelvis* I also deal with the problem of casting as an allusion to another medium, and make something which, in its own right, is sculpture.

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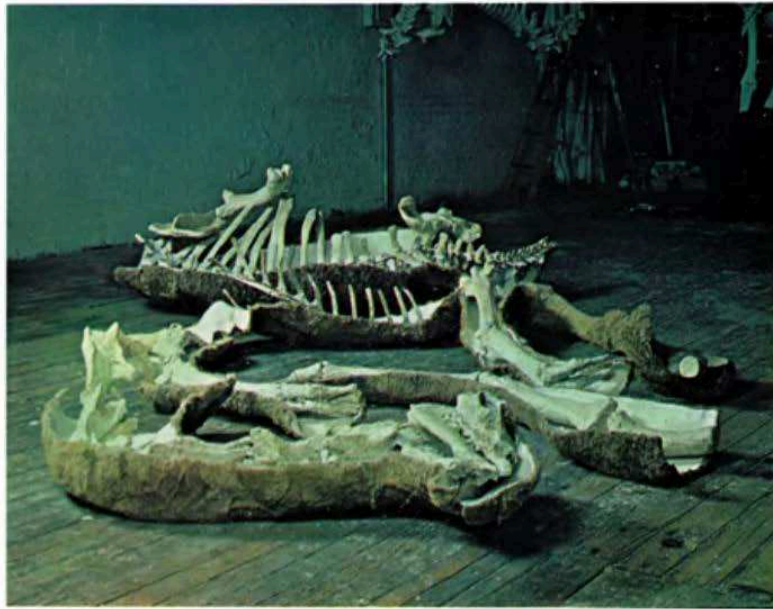
The Museum of Natural History in Florence, Italy (where I lived and worked during 1966) contains the wax-works of an 18th-century anatomist, named Susini. What I saw there was a man whose total obsession was circumscribed within a very academic situation. That is, he was trying to define human anatomy in terms of drawings, and their reproduction in wax. The results were art, even in terms of that socio-historical period, although they were not recognized as such—they were not just copied cadavers. Visually, it's the most emphatic thing—the attempt to be rigorous about whatever the problem was, was much more thorough and complete than most artists usually are. I could relate the various anatomical forms to the work of Claes Oldenburg. The significance of this for me was that Susini had produced a complex body of work from a single point of origin.

Did you have any inkling that those "soft form" camels which looked back to Susini's work (or sideways at Oldenburg's) would lead you to the



*Calipers*, (after December, 1969) hot-rolled steel rods. "The metal rods indicate positive and negative measurements of a Pleistocene skeleton form. Placed on the floor, they measure each other. As they rust, their own shadows are cast."

*Inside-Outside*, January, 1970, 15' x 10' x 4', steel, fiberglass, modeling paste, acrylic. "The whole can be absorbed but cannot be defined in terms of something rational. . . . Most of the floor pieces . . . had to do with similar forms, in some way varied. . . ."





abstract hanging pieces?

Having done a lot of "art-making," I know what to avoid. This, to me, is not like what I see when I walk up and down Madison Avenue, and yet it couldn't have been made if I were not aware of all that. I have to keep an awareness of this in my own terms. Many artists work out of each other and gratefully acknowledge it. Once one acknowledges one's references, one tries to deny them, in another sense. It seems to me the only way to do that is to find another structure, another way of thinking, which doesn't allow for Western rationality. I really believe that that is the problem right now. One who keeps to that [Western] form is going to be trapped by it. So I would

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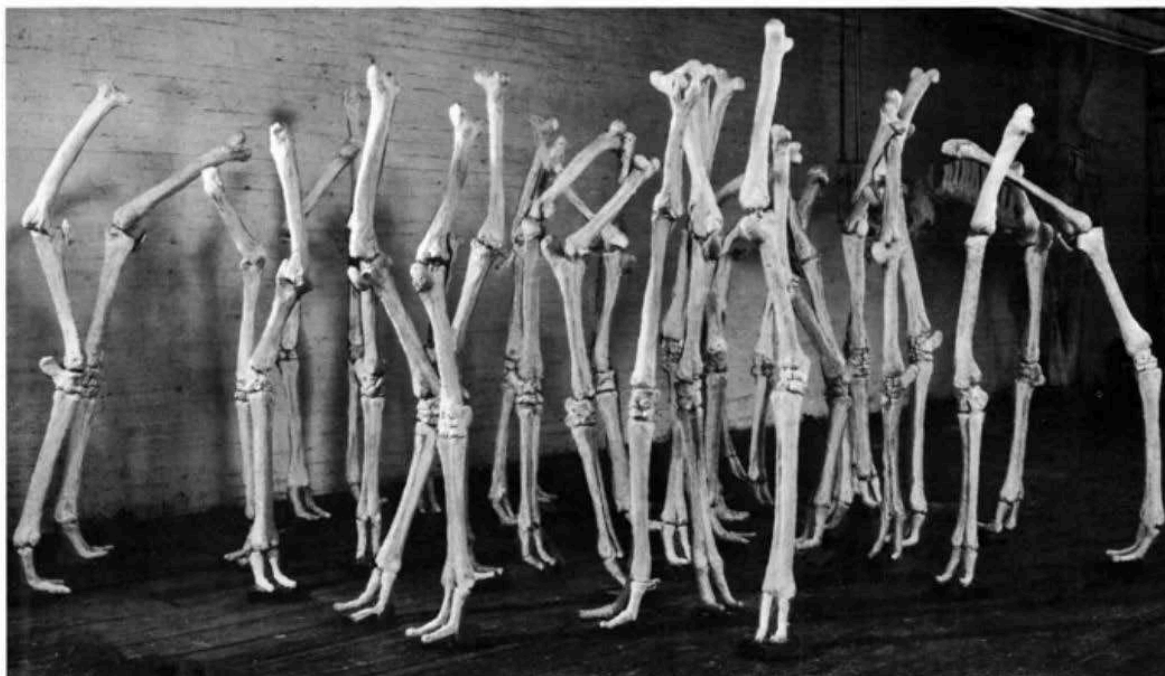
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Is this the piece called *Fossils Incorrectly Located*?

Yes. It was an early piece, but it was a departure I made from the camel skeletons. After its completion, I realized that it was more complex than any other floor piece. I tried to analyze why, and it seemed that the reason was because the forms are never reducible to a singular whole, but can only be perceived in terms of partite groupings. That refers to Ehrenzweig's terminology for one's haptic responses—the pre-cognitive and non-rational. You can absorb the whole, but you can't define it in terms of something rational. I tried to bring this out with my own work.

When I was making the film (*Goulimime*, 1970,





Variability of Similar Forms, 36 units, March, 1970, 61½" x 25" x 10", steel, wax, modeling paste, acrylic. "An equivocation of leg movements."



Relocated Paleo Indian Cave Painting, South-Western Arizona, July, 1970. Top to bottom dimensions: 12' x 3' x 1½', 6' x 10' x 1', 9' x 5' x 1½', steel, fiberglass, acrylic. Suspended from ceiling, leaning against the wall, resting on floor, propped by boards. Inscribed with schematic diagrams of upturned animals' heads, outstretched necks, lines of bodies and forelegs.

a ten-minute film of a Moroccan camel market) I was also concerned with the problem of equating movement to a physical, static situation, in the piece called *Variability of Similar Forms*, made up of thirty-six leg units. It was a reverse of the movie situation; as one passes by the multiple static units of the sculpture, the overall form constantly changes.

Whereas, in the movie, the camera passes by the forms, and the film itself defines the movement. With the sculpture, the viewer is providing the movement, outside of those separate, but grouped forms.

Yes... Futurism and Cubism were both two-dimensional and static painterly forms, for the most part. Here, the form of the leg images is relative to the positioning of the observer.

Meanwhile, during the time you were doing these "inside/outside" bone pieces, you were already thinking about the hanging pieces—you were ahead of yourself by a few months?

Yes. In the *Hair-Bone Piece* which I did in Germany during July, each of the fifty units will be approximately ten feet tall, and physically, they will appear as something in between the thirty-six unit leg piece (*Variability of Similar Forms*) and

the *Shadow-Reflections with Sun-Disks*.

I'm interested now in the problem of "levity"; that is, a lot of these pieces move independently. They have a fulcrum, and yet it appears that they should weigh a great deal. Each part is free-moving. Even in the *Taxidermy Piece*, every point moves relative to a fulcrum.

When I was last here at the studio, you were talking about those pieces (*Hanging Vertical Wire Piece*, and *Skin Bisected*; *Shadow Reflection*), and you also mentioned mnemonic imagery...

There is an aluminum wire piece (*Hanging Mnemonic Wire Piece*) which I haven't completed, and don't know whether I can be successful about it. It is an idea that is only known to one person, therefore, to me it is a reflection piece. Every time there is a loop in the wire, that's a point of departure, but only for the "knower of the form." But the difficulty is that the problem must be visual, and it may not have achieved that clearly.

Well, that is a quality of all symbols—mandalas, Tantric yantra diagrams, etc.—that they can only be understood if you happen to comprehend what that particular body of knowledge or religion is about.





*Obviation of Similar Forms*, March, 1970, 36" x 36" x 36", plaster, gauze, marble dust, acrylic. "The gestalt of an inside/outside, or a positive/negative, in a static and confined situation."



Nancy Graves, *Cast Shadows Reflecting From Four Sides*, plaster, gauze, 12" x 36" x 48", 1970. (Galerie Rieke, Cologne.)



Installation view, Neue Galerie im Alten Kurhaus, Aachen, July, 1970. (All photos except *Cast Shadows* . . . and the Aachen installation, Peter Moore.)

Yes, and that interests me also. *The Obviation of Similar Forms* is, again, an "inside/outside" piece. And it's a positive/negative situation as well. The "pluses" support the "minuses." If a form is repeated in a static and close enough confined situation, it becomes impossible to see it. The result is the gestalt; having departed from there, I came back to it.

Despite the gestalt, when you look at the piece, you do see all the different parts. . . .

But the fact remains that the separate forms are varied, yet all are of a like species—leg bones. Calipers in a visual context should be related to the *Fossils Incorrectly Located*—if you're talking about the bones—this is the "bones of the bones!" Because the ideas are more complex than the visual explication, it's unsatisfactory, however. Each caliper is the measurement of the spaces within the *Pleistocene Skeleton*. They measure both the negative and positive spaces, and when placed on the floor, each rod rusts to form its own shadow. When the corrosion separates, it is then a kind of residual cast, or a shadow.

You mean that once the rods are on the floor, they measure only each other?

Yes. When you remove a caliper from its source, what remains is the measurement; the rod becomes the "positive," while the spaces between them are "negative."

Why is the measurement considered "negative?"

It's another way of perceiving the physical fact of that situation. You're right back with the "bones of the bones" again!

*Cast Shadow Reflecting Itself From Four Sides* followed *Obviation of Similar Forms*. Each of these units is visually and spatially interdependent. The piece extends from floor to ceiling, and is another "inside/outside" situation.

In that other shadow/reflection piece (*Shadow-Reflections with Sun-Disks*) the units are bone-like, but also feathery. They remind me of the war standards decorated with feathers on a long pole, carried along with battle shields and weapons by some American Indian tribes.

Yes, that's in there; but I didn't consciously make that translation. The piece is made of 2 steel rings, each with eighteen hanging units formed with gauze and a wax adhesion. I did want to make something which was that light, each unit being interdependent. I was also inter-

ested in the circle—sun-disk—as it related to the American Indian.

What is that group of animal skin strips hanging from the ceiling?

That's a *Totem with Shadows*. The idea of a totem incorporates its own "shadow"—the man and his totem are one and the same (in name, in life context, in spirit). Additionally, there are shadows of the forms themselves, the animal skins and parts, in complementary colors (orange skins/blue shadows).

It's certainly like a fetish, or other such talisman. . . .

That's as far as it can go, it seems, in terms of the literalness. This is an additional way of dissecting the same forms.

Traditionally, small fetishes were worn around the neck, or carried in a pouch, but here, suddenly it's giant, so it is scary.

There's another similar piece where a spike penetrates a camel's head, which has a beatific expression on its face—it is impaled eight feet above the floor. It's very primitive, but it's also very pastoral. ■