

MoMA

The Museum of Modern Art

Photography into Sculpture

Author(s): Peter C. Bunnell

Source: *Members Newsletter (Museum of Modern Art)*, Spring, 1970, No. 8 (Spring, 1970), pp. 11-12

Published by: The Museum of Modern Art

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/4380594>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



The Museum of Modern Art is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Members Newsletter (Museum of Modern Art)*

JSTOR

Photography into Sculpture

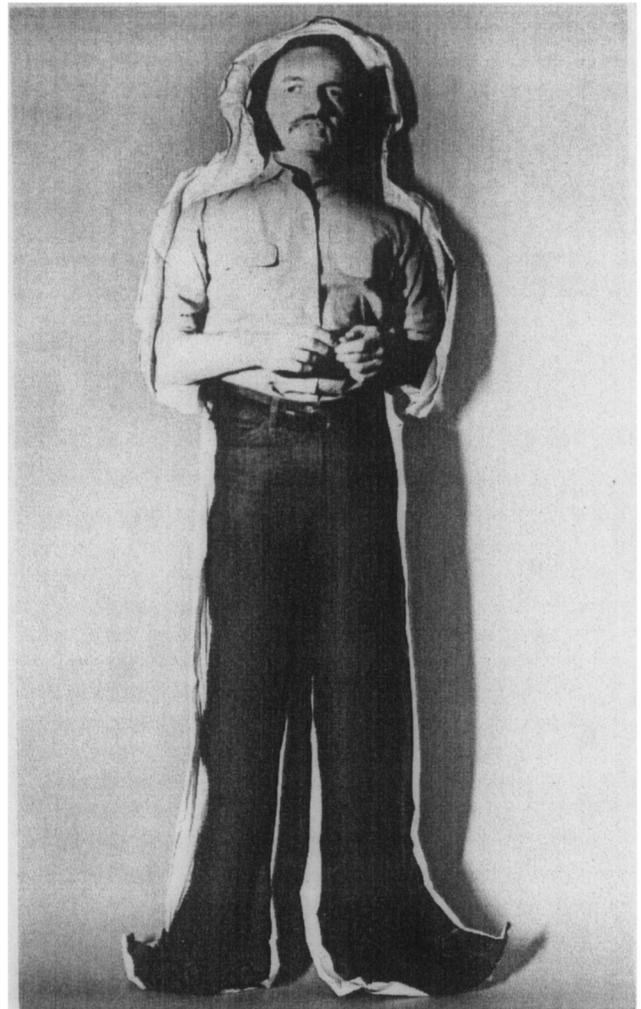
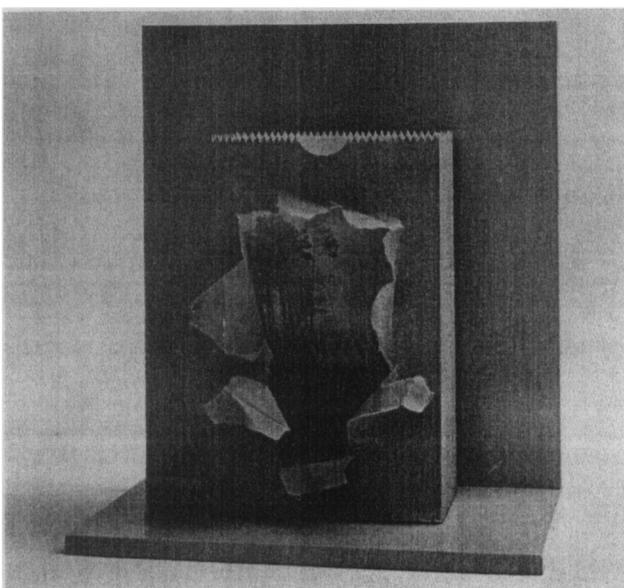
The current notion of what a photograph looks like is that it is a piece of paper on which there is a more-or-less recognizable image which is interpreted in terms of two dimensions standing for three, picture size representing life size, and a variety of grays representing colors. All of these conceptions are perfectly adequate as far as they go, but they do not exhaust the complexities of contemporary photography.

In recent years photographers and many other artists, who have turned from other disciplines, have pressed toward a concept of photography which encompasses an alternative formal perspective and is more responsive to new technology. A result of this assertive stance has been the exploration of a different kind of photography, one in which the previously illusionistic qualities of space and scale are transformed into actual space and dimension, thereby shifting photography into sculpture. This provocative direction, which has been taken only in the last two or three years, has by no means reached the zenith of its significance.

It is with this direction that the exhibition *Photography into Sculpture* is concerned. Comprised of some 50 objects, in which only photographs or photographically derived images are used, it is the first comprehensive showing of such work. It is conceived as a sequel to the 1968 exhibition *Photography as Printmaking*, which also showed work that extended by example the practical conception of photography. *Photography into Sculpture* seeks to embrace concerns beyond those of the traditional print, or what may be termed "flat" work, and in so doing hopes to engender a heightened realization that art in photography has to do with interpretation and craftsmanship rather than mere record-making.

More than 20 American and Canadian artists are represented in the exhibition. Most are young, in their twenties or early thirties; the majority of the

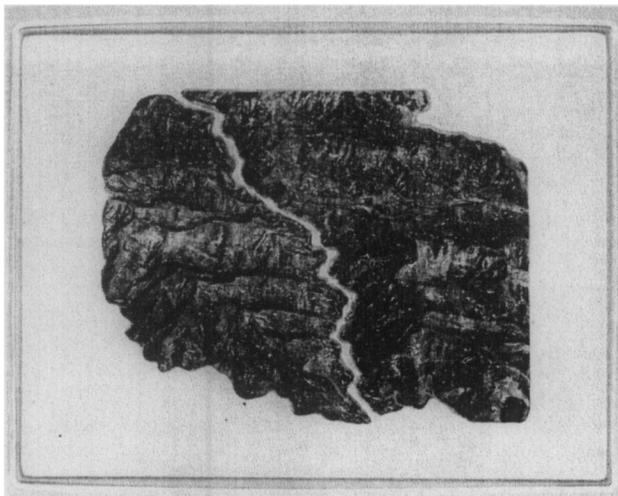
Jerry McMillan. *Torn Bag*. 1968. Photograph construction, height 14". Owned by the artist



Lyn Wells. *Untitled*. 1969. Sensitized linen and urethane foam, height 6'. Owned by the artist

Americans are from Los Angeles and elsewhere on the West Coast. In most instances the work is wholly original, but in some cases the artists have followed Constructivist techniques, the Dada masters Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, and more contemporary assemblagists and illusionists such as Rauschenberg, Gooch, and Cornell. Among the artists included in the exhibition are Ellen Brooks, Robert Brown, Carl Cheng, Darryl Curran, Jack Dale, Michael deCourcy, Karl Folsom, Andre Haluska, Robert Heinecken, Richard Jackson, Jerry McMillan, Bea Nettles, James Pennuto, Joe Pirone, Douglas Prince, Dale Quarterman, Charles Roitz, Leslie Snyder, Michael Stone, Robert Watts, and Lyn Wells. Only one, Robert Heinecken, has been shown previously at the Museum and is represented in the Museum collection. It is Heinecken who may be considered an innovator in some of the techniques represented and who, as a Professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, has encouraged a lively environment for new ideas in photography.

Stressing these new sculptural artifacts in no way depreciates the nature of the intrinsic optical image. In fact, to appreciate these multi-media directions one must recognize how distinctly the artist adheres to the underlying photo-optical basis of his work and, indeed, how he seeks to find his way to the

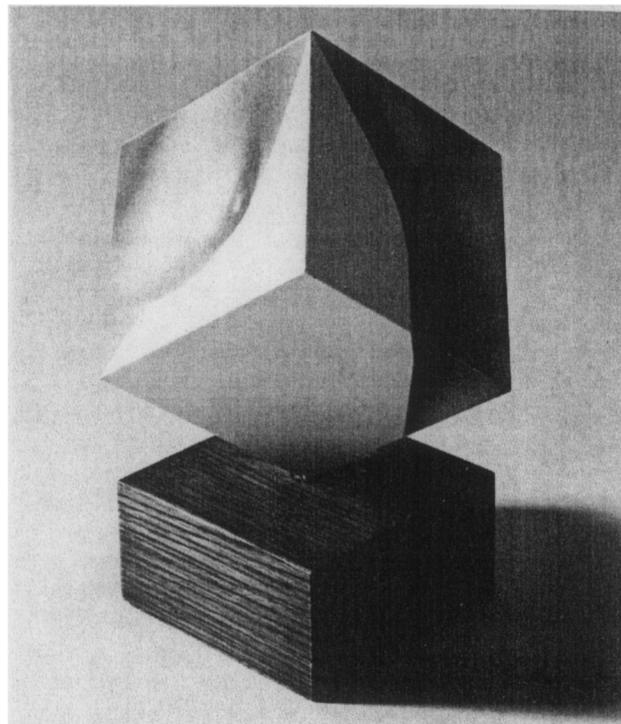
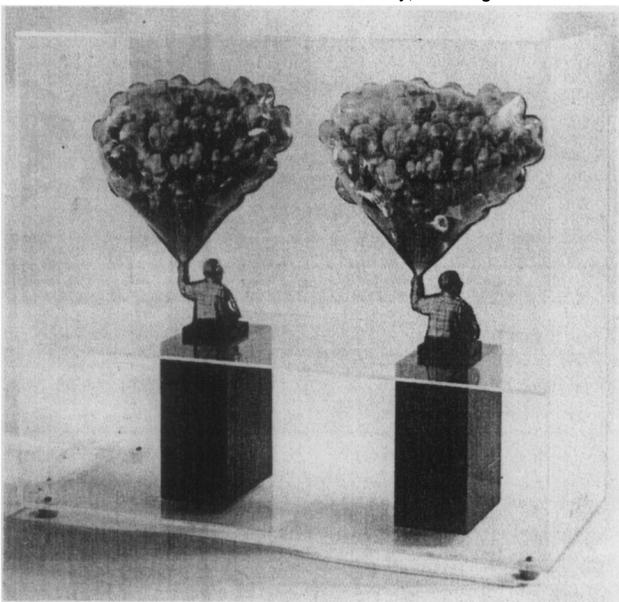


Robert Brown and James Pennuto. Section of *3 Phase Split*. 1970
Photo-serigraph and vacuum-formed plastic, each section
23½" x 30½" x 2". Owned by the artists

properties inherent to photography itself. When a man makes a photograph he takes subjects—things—as he finds them and, with the necessary selectivity to determine their significance, manipulates them into an expression of his perceptions and feelings so that they may constitute a revelation. It is not what is said implicitly that counts as a work of art, it is what the artist makes with such intensity of purpose that it lives with an intrinsic sensibility of its own that verifies its authenticity.

It is this metamorphosis that identifies the artist's creativity in the execution of a piece that imaginatively fuses the literal or symbolic component of the photographic image with a specific form. Along with artists of every persuasion, these photographer/sculptors are seeking a new intricacy of meaning analogous to the complexity of our senses. They are moving from simple iconography—of sex, the environment, family, war—to new materials which

Carl Cheng. *Sculpture for Stereo Viewers*. 1968. Film and molded plastic. 18" x 16" x 8". Esther-Robles Gallery, Los Angeles



Robert Heinecken. *Light Figure Cube*. 1965. Photographs and wood, height 8". Owned by the artist

are incorporated as content and at the same time used as a way of conceiving actual space. The sculptural ideas involved insist on volumetric properties which intellectually and physically correlate form, space, and light; the pictorial space is made to work in combination with a literally three-dimensional environment.

All sculpture depends on the manipulation of materials. Historically, the techniques of sculpture have reflected the technological level and character of the society in which the sculpture was produced. The works in *Photography into Sculpture* are wholly modern in that they clearly parallel the intellectual framework of our scientific culture. If California artists dominate, it is mainly because their commitment to technology has been more significantly gratified, if not fulfilled. The exhibition includes works employing a variety of techniques: contour vacuum-molded plastic containers for photographs and film transparencies; film positives sandwiched in lucite constructions of varying depths, to be viewed with either reflected or transmitted illumination; photo-sensitized contour-molded cloth sculptures; life-size figural compositions constructed from several hundred glass transparencies with multidimensional views; fabricated pictorial or illusionistic boxed environments; participation puzzles; contour vacuum-formed topographic landscapes; lucite cubes of photographs; dimensional wall constructions; reductive sculptures of multiple pictorial boxes; and light/negative constructions.

—Peter C. Bunnell
Curator, Department of Photography

Photography into Sculpture. Directed by Peter C. Bunnell.
Through July 5