

## Anthony Caro

Mitchell-Innes & Nash

This well-chosen show, "Anthony Caro: Painted Sculpture," organized to coincide with the British sculptor's retrospective at the Tate Modern (through the 17th of this month), brought together an excellent sampling of his late-1960s and early-'70s painted-steel works, along with new galvanized-steel assemblages. Despite its size, however, the show only hints at the astonishing breadth of Caro's career.

By the time even the earliest pieces here were made, Caro had already arrived at his mature style, influenced by David Smith's welded sculpture and Clement Greenberg's advocacy of bare-bones modernism. The sculpture *Bearing* (1967), for instance, a long, green, steel beam hovering horizontally about bench high from the floor, might look at home in a baseball dugout, except that all the weight is supported on one end by four spidery legs. The beam seems impossibly heavy for the legs and clearly demon-



Anthony Caro, *Table Piece Canter*, 2004, galvanized steel and cast iron, 26" x 30½" x 9½". Mitchell-Innes & Nash.

strates Caro's ability to create satisfying sculptural tension with simple, seemingly arbitrary compositions.

*Cadence* (1968–72), the show's centerpiece, is a startling, waist-high arrangement of steel sheets, rods, and pipes that resembles an elegant, if bizarre, design for a hang glider. As with all the painted sculptures, the flat, unmodulated color—here a dull ochre—unifies each work, making the eccentricities of its out-of-balance composition appear inevitable.

Among the recent works were smaller assemblages of heavy-duty industrial castoffs—steel pipe fittings, grappling hooks, brackets—galvanized to produce a rough silver finish. Where the earlier works here continued to surprise and

challenge, these, such as *Table Piece Canter* (2004), suggestive of David Smith, and *Table Piece Humbolt* (2003–4), recalling Richard Stankiewicz, came off as somewhat tame. Instead of exploring new territory, they paid homage to Caro's influential welder-predecessors. —Rex Weil

## Richard Serra

Danese and Gemini G.E.L. LLC at Joni Moisant Weyl

"Consistent" is a somewhat abused term often applied to artists. It sometimes translates as "repetitive." But this latest series of prints by Richard Serra makes it abundantly clear that an artist can have a limited range of concerns over several decades and still wrest from them a succession of magnificent pieces.

The prints in the "Arc of the Curve" series include some of the biggest etchings ever made. Those called "Extension" are about 4 by 3 feet; the "Trajectories" are bigger still; and the remarkable "Transversals" stretch to almost 8 by 4 feet. They appeared all the more disconcerting for their simplicity. Each presents a huge sweep of fat black ink that almost fills the rectangle of paper hosting it, bleeding off its top and bottom edges but curving slightly away from its sides.

Standing in front of the overwhelming "Transversals," one was uncertain whether this vast black expanse was even an image at all. More than a pound of ink is used to create each impression, and its relationship with the paper feels more physical than pictorial. Similarly—despite having been produced by the traditional techniques of biting, inking, wiping, and pulling—they are difficult to classify as etchings. The ink's surface is rough and pitted, like what might result from simply monoprinting ink rolled across a flat surface. But of course, the nature of the etching process is vital for Serra, and these pieces are so squarely in keeping, so consistent with his ethos of sculpture as physical material that he not only obliges us to question our assumptions about the activity that is printmaking but actually extends what that activity might be. —Robert Ayers



Richard Serra, *Transversal #4*, 2004, one-color etching, 90" x 48". Gemini G.E.L. LLC.

## Robert Morris

Leo Castelli

From Robert Morris, one of the iconic masters of Minimalism, came this unexpected recent series of easel-size encaustic paintings on wood panel. While Morris has long left the stark confines of reductive objects, moving on to Process art and Earthworks—and in the 1980s, to monumental Hydrocal and fiberglass castings of ornate frames and paintings with apocalyptic themes—these works were surprising for their modest scale and straightforward conceptualization.

The paintings, an intelligent pastiche, were suffused with the cool, lonesome light of Edward Hopper and the deadpan oddities of René Magritte, along with a dash of de Chirico, but the surface treat-



Robert Morris, *Weeping House*, 2004, encaustic on wood panel, 30" x 42". Leo Castelli.

ment was more earnest than theirs and somewhat labored. Poetically titled "Small Fires and Mnemonic Nights," the show commented on war, loss, and mem-