January 16 – February 20, 2005

The Here and Now
Sanford Biggers
Katrin Sigurdardottir
Javier Téllez

The Renaissance Society
at The University of Chicago

Nature—daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! The Here and Now

What is it to be admitted to a museum, to see a myriad of particular things, compared with being shown some star's surface, some hard matter in its comparison to Zen poetry, which often addressed the heavens. Thoreau's account is stepped in daze. It's more to use the word to metaphysical musings, "Who are we?" Where are we?

Here and Now

The Here and Now takes these same questions on terms belonging to solitude. The exhibition features three artists represented by a single work each of which addresses the notion of presence—literally, metaphysically and spatially. All three of the works call attention to features of the gallery that make it a unique space. In this regard, the facts in the title of the exhibition refers to the gallery and more specifically to work's position in the gallery, whether it is sitting on rails near a silver, singing bowl, having to negotiate one's way around a large bamboo barrier, or walking oneself up a series of stairs to view islands off the coast of Iceland. Each work is an invitation to critically reflect upon one's relationship to the art work and in its making.

Once experienced in situ, however, any notion on the part of these sculptures toward site-specificity is abruptly halted. Consciusness of location as an end itself is antithetical to this grouping of work, which allows all three works to reveal metaphor as derived from a direct encounter with the work. Just as Thoreau's spiritual quest was played out in the Maine geography, these three sculptures make concrete the imagination's how to see (and think) through and beyond the art object itself.

At one point in the show I prepared a list of sentences that I wish to remember. They are thoughts about the three works, and Thoreau's phenomenological connection with nature given way to the burning questions "Who are we? Where are we?"

The Here and Now

Where is my Buddha-mind?

Nature is a simple, iron plinth resting on the ground. It takes no special equipment, or special spiritual journey, as effort to know the world in the profound sense of trying to grasp the mind's role in understanding experience. In the above passage, nature, body, and soul aligns together synchronously, as though it were a match stick ("Contact, Contact"). Thoreau's phenomenological connection with nature given way to the burning questions "Who are we? Where are we?"

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