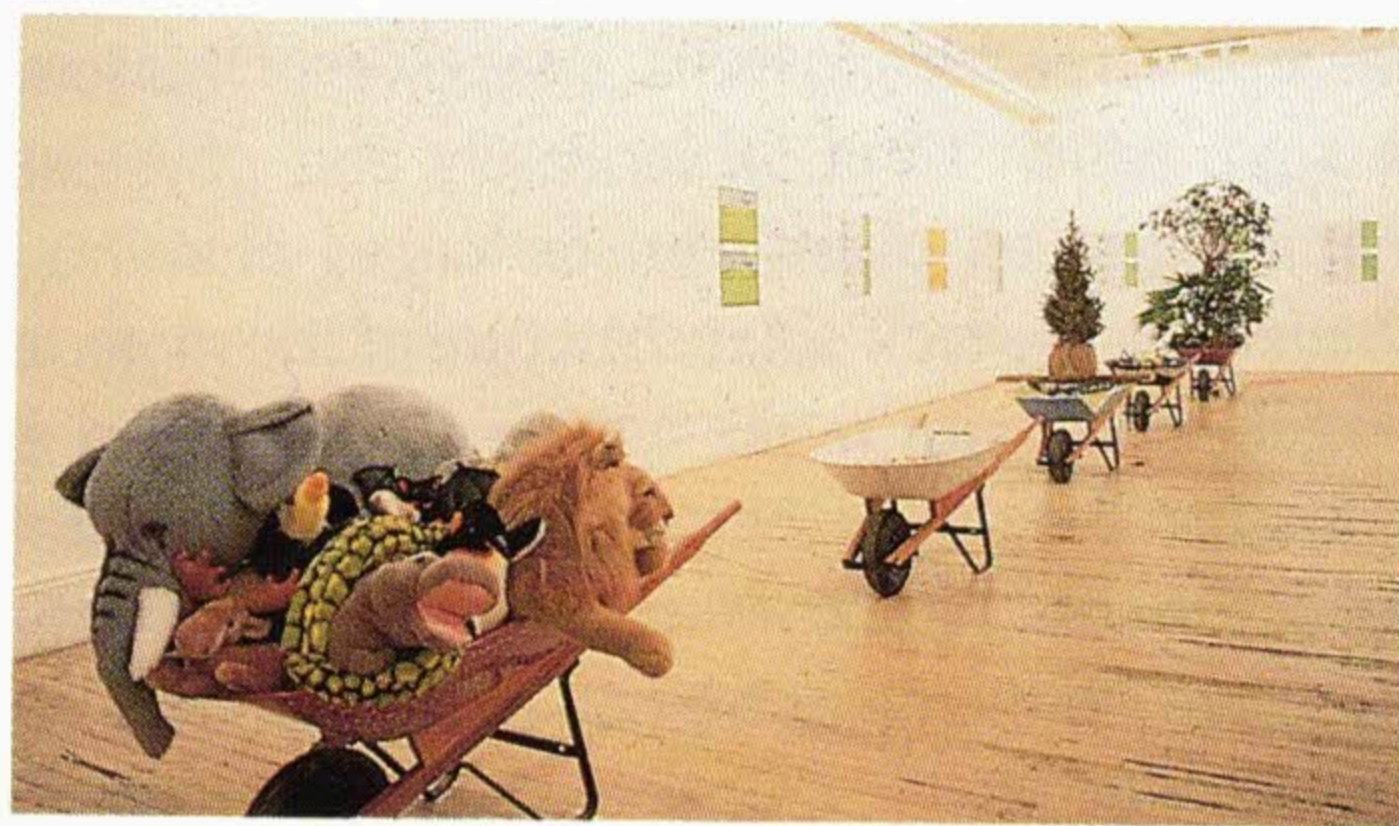


business in this fiasco. Since Haacke's practice is always topical, what better issue to examine? The central installation of the exhibition is composed of a large, theatrical-prop-size replication of an open box of "Helmsboro" cigarettes, graced with the portrait of the senator, statements by the senator on the Mapplethorpe and Serrano material extracted from the *Congressional Record*, as well as extracts from a statement by George Weissman entitled, "Philip Morris and the Arts," and The Bill of Rights (as distributed by the Philip Morris Companies). The core of this piece and others in the exhibition—including replications of Braque and Picasso collages comprising fragments of various texts produced by Philip Morris to promote MoMA's Picasso and Braque exhibition (which they sponsored) juxtaposed with excerpts from commentary on that corporation's dissemination of a bill of rights promoting the freedom to choose smoking—concerns the identification of corporate hypocrisy and complicity regarding issues of censorship, freedom of speech, First Amendment rights, etc.

In the Picasso collage, Haacke has inserted a scrap of paper that specifies a summary of contributions made by the Philip Morris Companies (a five-year commitment to a \$100,000 pledge) to the Jesse Helms Center Foundation in Wingate, North Carolina. In these and other works, Haacke successfully constructs a visual experience that is informational, analytic: it provokes the viewer to continue the investigation into surreptitious relationships between big business and government which Haacke initiates by providing various didactic clues. It is left up to the viewer to draw the more general conclusions regarding the relative significance of such investigations, and to relate this information and new knowledge to his own life in a productive and critical manner. Haacke insists that the viewer reject a passive stance and engage in an exploration of cultural, political, economic, and social issues which is as appropriate for the art gallery context as the street. Although this is what we have come to expect from Haacke's methodology, he continues to deliver the goods in a thoughtful, circumspect, and entertaining manner. There is no knee-jerk here.

In one sense, **Mark Dion** has inherited from an artist such as Haacke (among others) a general working paradigm that utilizes the gallery context as a bridge (in) between the supposedly segregated domains of high culture and general culture (this is, of course, a rather uninformative distinction that is all too often reinforced for lack of more precise language) in order to illuminate their interpenetration. Like Haacke, Dion deals with particular issues that appear to exist outside the concerns of the art world but are, in fact, caught up with its very logic of exclusion. For Dion, then, there is no longer a question as to whether cultural production can address itself to events, crises, situations that exist beyond the parameters of institutionalization. In fact, Dion—like Haacke before him—has clearly discovered the benefits of exposure that accrue



Mark Dion with William Schefferline, Installation view, 1990. Courtesy American Fine Arts, Co.

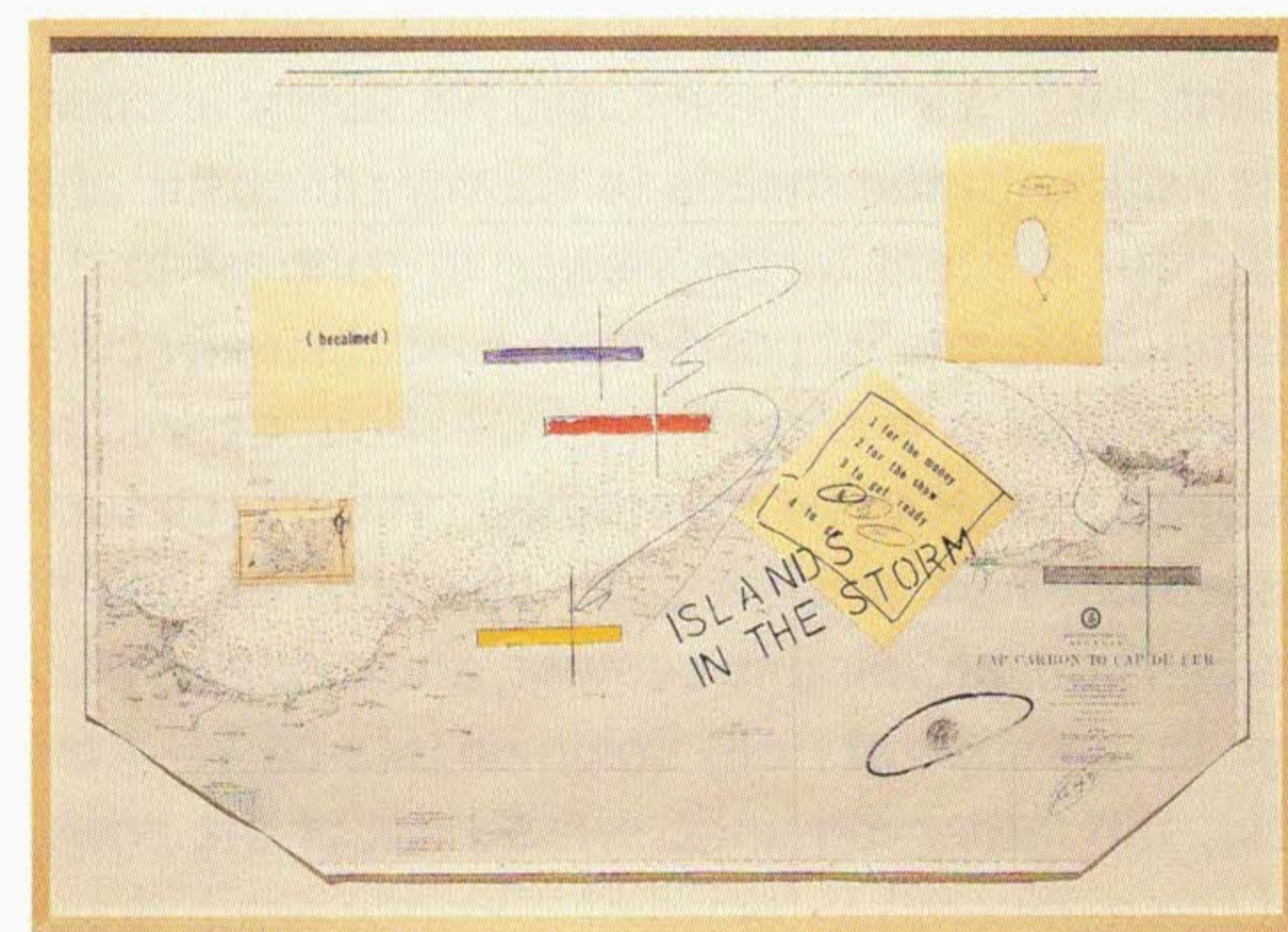
through the construction of gallery-specific projects. Yet in his new work at American Fine Arts (March 17–April 7), Dion presents a project which he has been engaged in for a number of years—and which has a life well beyond the walls of the gallery. It is the *Project for the Belize Zoo*. Dion presents a series of signs designed in conjunction with the staff of the Belize Zoo which identify endangered indigenous species. Each sign provides comprehensive information regarding the particular animal (e.g., spider monkey, jaguar, ocelot), a Western scientific pictorial representation of the species, and an ancient Belizean symbol of the same animal. The left side of each sign offers a brief account of the conversation techniques used to protect the species, all of which are included in the zoo. Currently, approximately half of Dion's signs have been installed on the grounds of the zoo, and the remainder will be integrated within the next two years. Dion also presents a video shot in Belize of three conservation projects that are ongoing. Dion's signs are visually engaging and, needless to say, brimming over with information. What is so admirable about this type of cultural production is that it rejects the comfort of the armchair and engages directly—and productively—in a different cultural context that is quite unconcerned with the art marketplace. Yet, ironically, it is that very marketplace that has partially facilitated Dion's own activity; here, the cultural domain becomes, for all intents and purposes, a vehicle through which to become a producer in a separate realm—but nonetheless a realm which demands attention from those concerned with ecology, conservation, and environment, etc. This is not simply an instance where an artist donates proceeds of sales to a particular fund or agency, but a case of direct, productive action that molds itself to the requirements of a rather alien cultural system of organization and meaning-production.

Joshua Decter

Working in the medium of words for over two decades, conceptual artist **Lawrence Weiner**'s anti-object, language-based work addresses the social context of artmaking, artmaking as production aimed at an audience. Branded as a sharpshooter of typographically slick, content-laden phrases, he uses gallery walls as enclosing

billboards that challenge viewers' analytical process. Weiner's word games play up the linguistic nature of the visual arts and propose its ultimate goal: the communication of ideas. Most of his pursuits address conceptual issues pertaining to objects and material in the physical world—they are essentially "signs" of meaning unleashed from the enclosure of material form. That is why the physicality of the (roughly) 40 works on paper amounting to an assortment of finished drawings, working drawings, notebook sketches, and designs for posters and exhibition announcements on view at Marian Goodman (March 6–31) are curious specimens of Weiner's thought processes and portray the necessity of graphically conceptualizing on paper even the most formless "art object." In effect, this exhibition presents an intimate view of Weiner's strategies, portraying his conceptual playfulness in physical, two-dimensional terms. Weiner said recently in an interview that "Art is produced to be presented," and the uncluttered simplicity of his "style" of contextualizing ideas represents a consistent thread of consumer-oriented graphics. Virtually all the works in the exhibition were executed between 1984 and 1990, except one from 1967. The intention of the show, as stated in its press release, was to "pull a cohesive working product" spanning some 25 years. It would have been a more interesting show if drawings from the '70s had also been included. In any event, the exhibition exposed Weiner's drawings as having the precision and neatness typical of an industrial designer or architect. His drawings are self-conscious stepping stones, and despite the graphic clarity of their inception, ambiguity is the final product of his free-floating signifiers loaded with political and social content.

Unlike Weiner, **Lucio Pozzi**'s more than 25 years of producing installation works has rarely focused on the linguistic representations of ideas; instead, his methods rest more on the armature of theatrics and dramatic appeal. Both Pozzi and Weiner expose social viewpoints as muffled political content. Since Pozzi's celebrated *Four Windows* installation at P.S. 1 in 1977, the audience for his installations has been less than adequate, partially due to the fact that his career seemed centered on



Lawrence Weiner, Islands in the Storm, 1989, Drawing on paper, 27 3/8" x 39 7/8". Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.



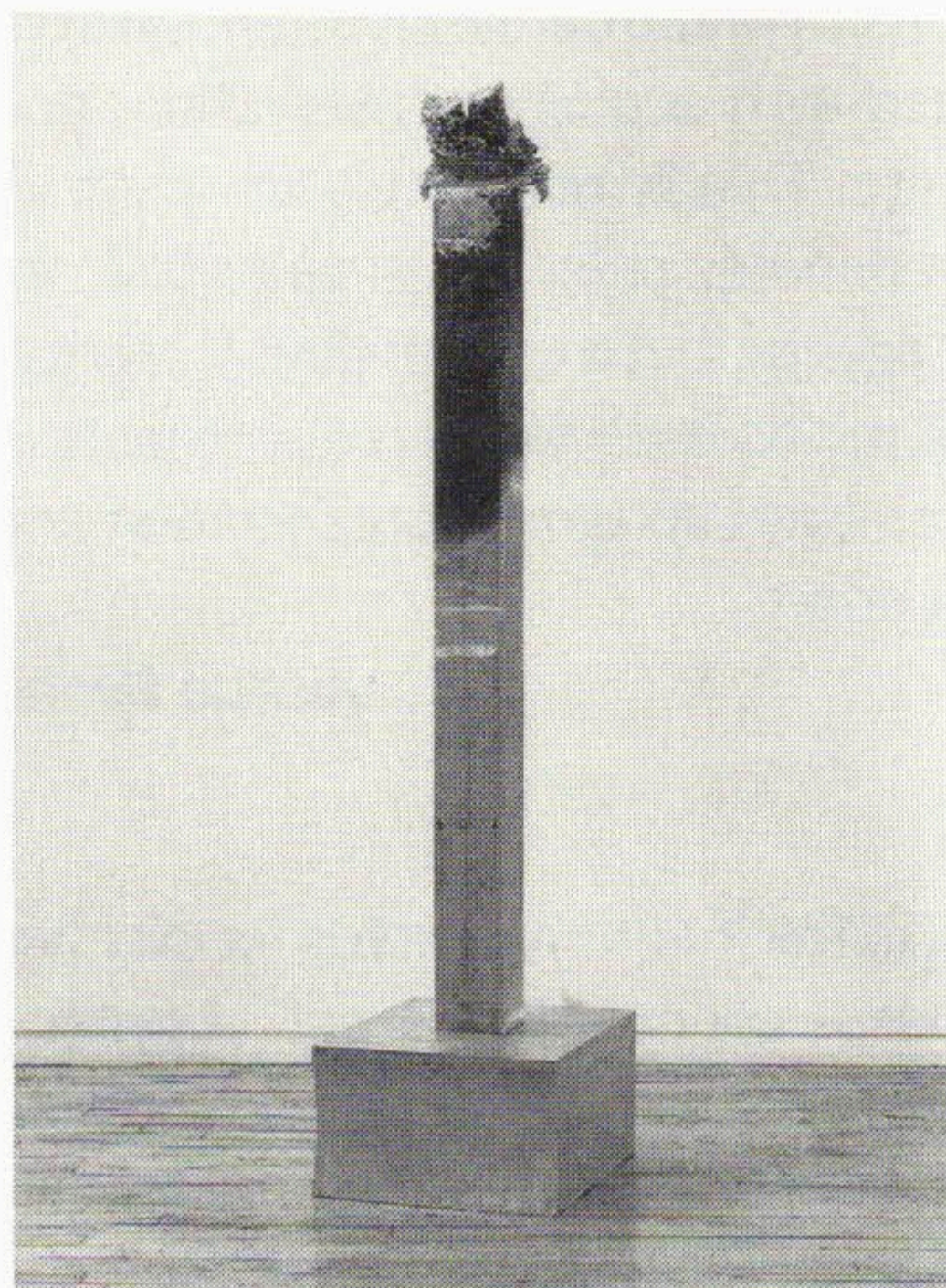
Lucio Pozzi, *Helmsman's Fear*, Installation view, 1990. Courtesy Hal Bromm.

his paintings. In a recent piece at Hal Bromm (February 19–April 30), *Helmsman's Fear*, Pozzi positions a political socio-sexual content with a self-imposed formalist system he has termed *The Inventory Game*. *Helmsman's Fear* is a playful, theatrical commentary on the controversy of censorship in the arts and the funding practices of the NEA, with Jesse Helms as the target of all the jousting. In this installation, Pozzi makes use of a selection of such categories from his formalist inventory—*4 Colors*, *Removal/Relocation*, and *Left/Right*. On the left is a giant-sized black-and-white photo of a nude male, mounted on canvas and stationed to a blue wall. The nude's genitalia have been targeted, that is, physically framed by a wooden helm. Directly in front of the wall is an angled sheet of wood painted red on which a portrait of Jesse Helms has been mounted. His eyes have been cut out and relocated to the opposite wall, which obscures a view of the nude figure. Directly to the right of this entire ensemble is another, almost identical except for one distinction. The male nude here is not as “endowed” in the genitalia department. This clever assembly of props and photos makes an issue of sexual repression and the government's “endowments” to the art community. As with most of Pozzi's work, ambiguously intertwined painterly, photographic, and theatrical props constitute an often humorous commentary on the social realm.

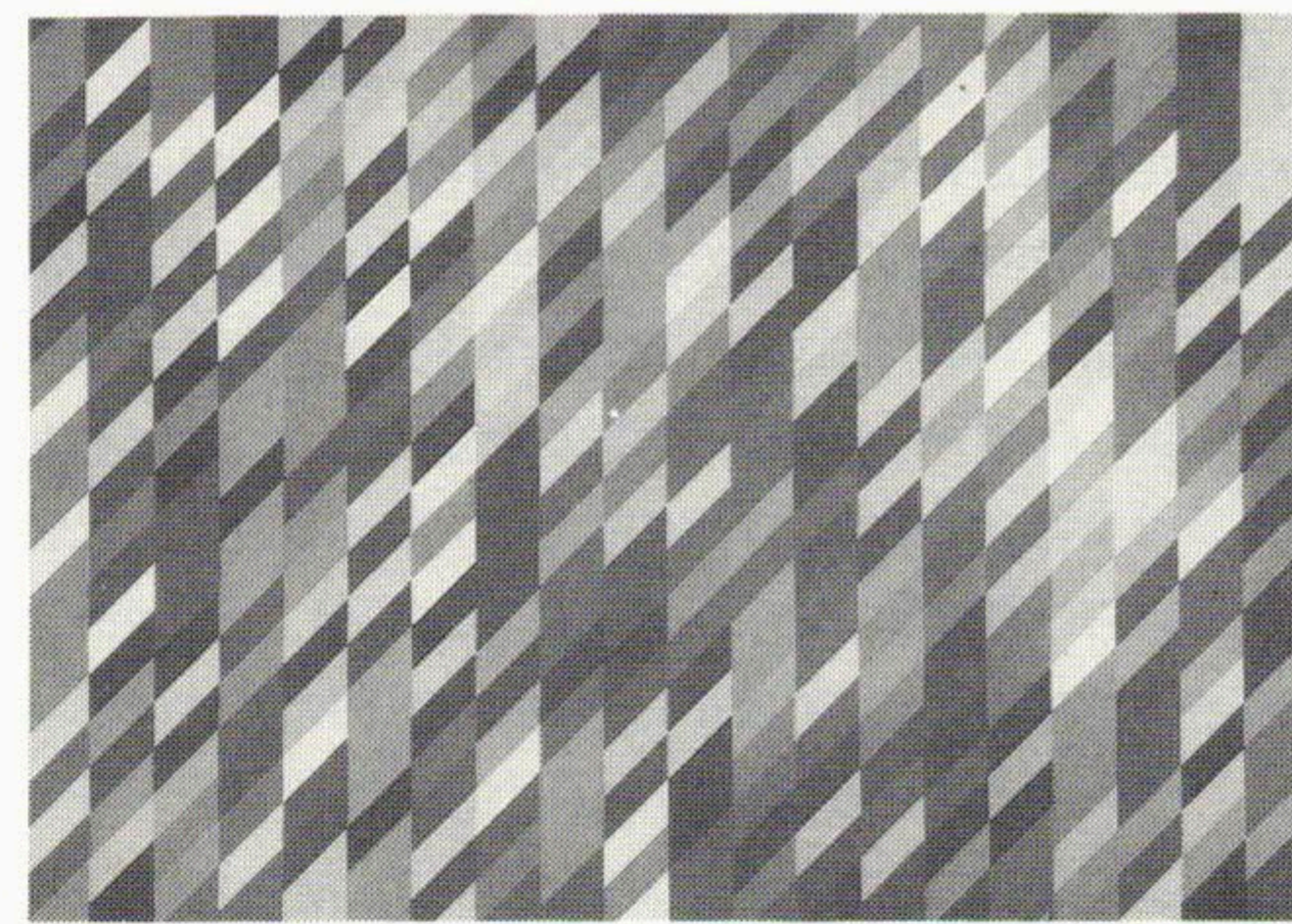
Alain Kirili's sculpture is grounded in his interest in classical statuary and the connection between sexual and spiritual forces as expressed in the phallic vertical shaft of a Hindu lingam monument. Kirili is a modernist, and his stance anchors his work with the means to convey ritualistic and religious content to the viewer, in contrast to the dominant formalist position of most abstract sculpture. Ritual is a condition of creation, as well as subject matter to be interpreted, in his sculptural assemblies of vertical shaft-like abstractions of forged iron, aluminum, cement, and modeled plaster. In this show at Holly Solomon (March 21–April 21), the rather romantic symbolism of the power of the regenerative forces of life once again draws reference from the lingam, a non-figurative stone monument to the Hindu God Siva, which the artist

has studied on trips to India. The power of this form, or sign, which Kirili symbolically and physically manipulates as pliant iron or forged aluminum, challenges the rock-solid structure of the material. Forged aluminum works appear to have been exploded on the tips of their shafts, the tops bursting out of the structural confines of the block. Whether these are emblems of human heads and intellectual activity, phallic eruptions, or budding flowers on a stem we are left to ponder. Other pieces, in plaster, are expressionistically handworked and create a dialogue of contrast to the metal works. Group sculptures such as *Oratorio* or *Generations* are clusters in which the interactions of various elements open up a play of readings between materials and forms. In these works, and in the show as a totality, Kirili seems intent on creating a dialogue between a range of parts, materials, and methods of working—the resulting cohabitation echoes the natural world. By referring historically back to the religious and sexual symbolism of the lingam and ancient statuary, Kirili manipulates a potent sculptural idea.

Kirili's modernist pursuit is an effort to synthesize the spiritual and the sensual, whereas **Marianne Stikas** strives for a unification of the scientific pursuit of exactness and specificity as it translates into the sensual. Her work is tightly elegant and serenely subtle. Semi-aquatic spaces are densely defined by translucent, almost vaporous, woven/waving apparitions. Her surface comprises glazed layers of color, predominantly blues and reds, which build dimensionally and float across a very dark understructure. The forms fall vertically like curling confetti in waving bands of semi-opaque folds. By combining the translucency of the glaze with the density of solidly dark patches, she achieves a microscopic, rendered view of her abstract mutations. In general, the formalist rigor that keeps this sensuously tight enterprise afloat isn't varied enough to lead us with anticipation from one painting to the next. The system is a bit tight, and therefore the paintings in this exhibition (John



Alain Kirili, *King IV*, 1987, Forged aluminum, 91" x 23" x 21". Courtesy Holly Solomon Gallery.



Bridget Riley, *R/o*, 1989, Oil on linen, 65" x 94½". Courtesy Sidney Janis Gallery.

Davis, March 6–31) are often repetitive. Nonetheless, the beauty of the paintings is undisputable—recalling the luminosity of fine moiré-patterned silk which tantalizes the imagination with its optical illusion of depth. The most successful works in the show are those in which the deep, watery atmosphere allows for veils of color—pink and green, for instance—to filter across and redefine forms, simulating the sensation of peering through a translucent sheet of ice to focus on the activity below.

Bridget Riley's new paintings are blankets of sensation. Riley, known for her major contribution to Op Art in the 1960s, now uses a high-chroma palette of fleshy pinks, hot oranges, and bright blues that overwhelm the viewer and optically caress the body in an almost three-dimensional way. The colored bands of hard-edge diagonal blocks ride across the surface and keep us at bay. Their sensory strategies are markedly different than those of Stikas, which encourage the illusion of entry. These large-scaled, geometricized, syncope armies of intensely oversaturated color represent Riley's first solo show (Sidney Janis, March 1–24) in almost 12 years. To the disappointment of some, she has dropped the curvaceous optical undulations that marked earlier Op Art projects for a more wall-like overall slanting grid of interlocking parallelograms. The range of high-pitched blues, pinks and yellows recalls Bonnard's translations of light-saturated space into luscious color, but hers obviously are devoid of the appeal of painterly paint. Perhaps we've come to expect more restraint from Riley in colorist terms and more freedom in the graphic trickery of her sensory assemblies of the segmented picture plane, and therefore the show is a bit of a letdown. The overall strategy of her optics operates similarly to strokes of heavy paint applied in one continuous oblique movement, like rain blown in slanted drifts by the wind, mapping out an itinerary of overwhelming color sensations that fold around the viewer as light-filled space.

Forces of optical sensation are rearranged into graphically distinct and centrally charged amalgams of geometric planar space in the paintings of **Stephen Westfall**. In concurrent exhibitions, one at Daniel Newburg (March 3–April 7) and the other at Pretto/Berland Hall (March 13–31), the artist