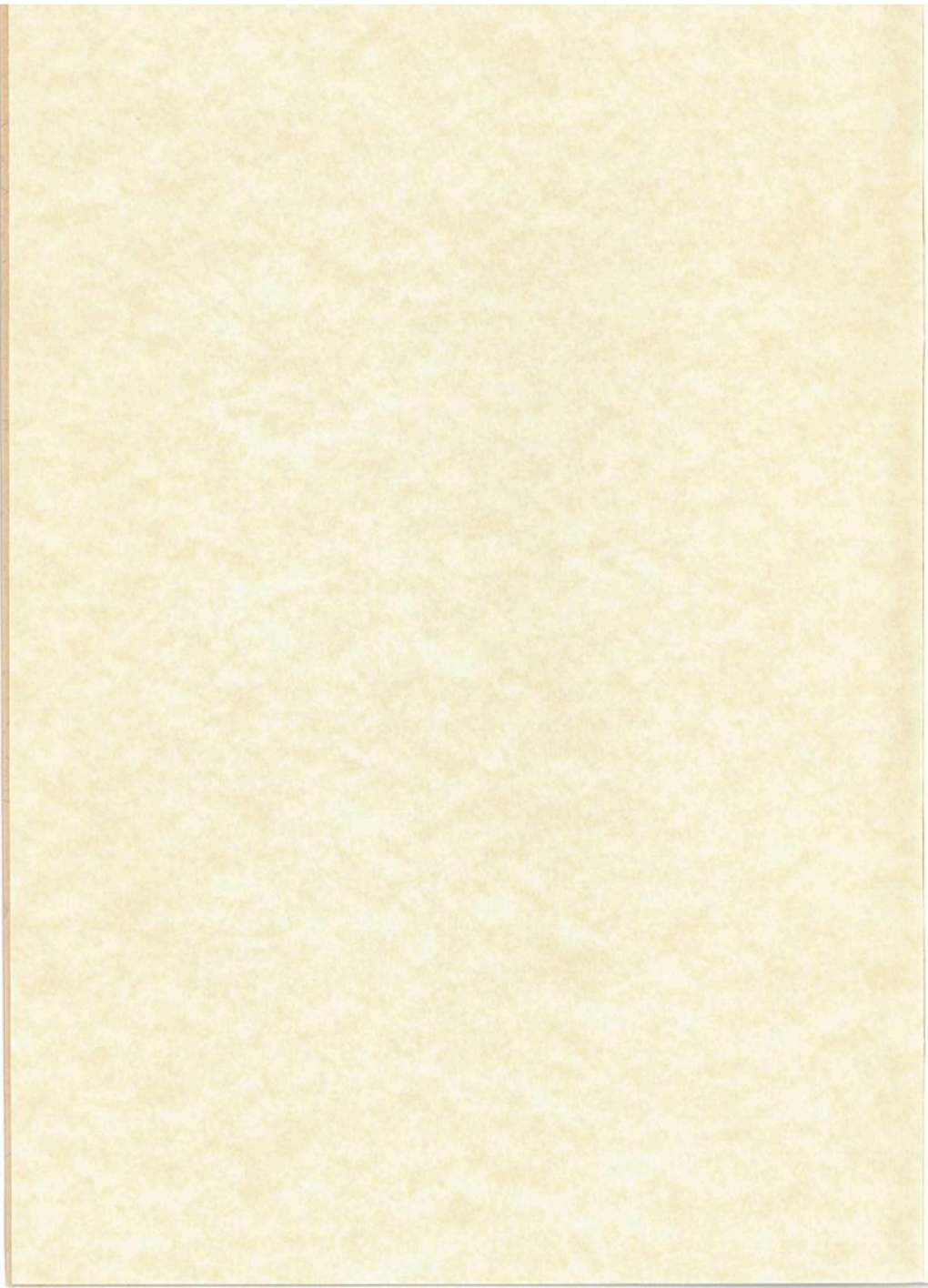


working with the wall



**working with the wall**

Curated by Jennifer Hardy

10 February - 12 March 1994

**Ivan Dougherty Gallery**  
The University of New South Wales • College of Fine Arts

## a short introduction

This exhibition was initially proposed by one of the participating artists who perceived a need to exhibit wall supported three dimensional works, a subject seldom articulated. A concise request, a simple brief? Not so. The preliminaries to the exhibition spawned a list of questions, each with its own array of accompanying complexities, compromises and limitations.

Sculpture is not normally reliant on gallery walls for support and can often be limited or compromised in a gallery space. The artists invited to exhibit in *working with the wall* are all prone to the influences of specific sites, particularly by those built into the art gallery (not a neutral space). These factors inevitably determine scale, size and placement within an architectural enclosure<sup>1</sup>. These conditions of compromise can produce an attentiveness, a consciousness of the gallery's artificiality which can decide approach, inquiry or solution, complexities quite different from those involving free-standing or outdoor sculpture.

Perceptions of space as in the quote below, illustrate how conventional observation can place limitations on our understanding of sculpture.

"In the perception of relative size the human body enters into the total continuum of sizes and establishes itself as a constant on that scale... The quality of intimacy is attached to an object in a fairly direct proportion as its size diminishes in relation to oneself. The quality of publicness is attached in proportion as the size increases in relation to oneself... The qualities of publicness or privateness are imposed on things."<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the complex issues associated with 'work' and 'site', the artists participating in the exhibition have individually utilised the gallery walls and formed with them a working relationship of variable intensity. These works are created for the wall - a wall within a room - and are not intended for the landscape.

Using the wall as a support for three dimensional sculpture pointedly narrows the working brief for the artists and heightens the interdependency of work and placement.

This juncture of work to wall, this field where two surfaces meet, is the point of interplay, the interstice of potentiality.

The artists' works and their relationship to site are best qualified by their own comments, even though ... "the sculptor's most important statement is not in words but in the work itself... As we all know, every development in art and every individual work is open to more than one interpretation<sup>3</sup>."

The especial power of some works is to communicate or impress a subliminal image into our own personal ambit of experience, establishing new interactions and associations. This expansion of the psyche through our relationship with works and their inherent meanings can be an enormously stimulating engagement of inner thought and outward connection. Meanings are set in motion by the dialogue that arises within us when we encounter a particular work and begin to become aware of the effects it is capable of producing. What questions or associations the viewer brings to the artworks, however, are beyond even the gallery's control, let alone that of the curator.

Q: "Why didn't you make it larger so that it would loom over the observer?"

A: I was not making a monument.

Q: Then why didn't you make it smaller so that the observer could see over the top?

A: I was not making an object."<sup>4</sup>

**Jennifer Hardy**

January 1994

<sup>1</sup> Here I have dealt only with the physical qualities that influence a gallery space; this is not to deny the existence of political, historical, cultural, commercial, social or educational characteristics of the site

<sup>2</sup> Robert Morris 'Notes on Sculpture 1 - 3', *Art in Theory 1900 - 1990, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford 1992, part II, p. 817

<sup>3</sup> Graeme Sturgeon, *Contemporary Australian Sculpture*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1991, introduction P. xxiii

<sup>4</sup> Tony Smith's replies to questions about his six-foot steel cube, Robert Morris, *Op. Cit.*, p. 816

## daniel cole

Born Sydney 1966  
Lives and works in Sydney

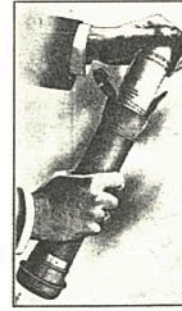


FIG. 7 CARRIER FOR PAPERS



FIG. 8 CARRIER WITH LOCKING LID FOR TRANSPORTING CHECKS OR MONEY



FIG. 9 CARRIER WITH INDICATOR DESIGNATING ANY EMPLOYEE OR DEPARTMENT

*Transactions of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (Handling Papers and Small Articles by Pneumatic Tubes)* James Whiting 1929, Volume 51 (2), p. 99

*Speak, Pipe, Pneumas* - the elements air, pipe and sound. Distinct yet within reference to an accommodating surface. Inherent to most wall space - domestic or industrial - can be found variations of pipe/wire networks, lines and curves of conduit. Purpose is the conveyance of *substance* between points.

At various points along this grid of pipes are listening areas where air and voice, sound and substance can be *noted or registered*. These slots are more about noticing a flow of substances as it *passes by*, rather than an intent listening which may effect a stop, a cut in continuance.

Distinct yet within reference to an accommodating surface.

Knock three times on the ceiling if you want me,  
twice on the pipe if you don't

Trad. (thanks A. P.)

## peter crocker

Born Oakland California 1952  
Lives and works in Sydney



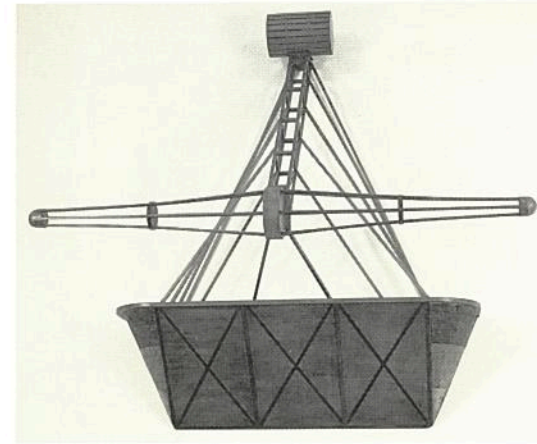
*Shepherd's Tale* 1993 wire, stones 100 x 20 x 13 cm  
Collection of the Artist Photo: Peter Crocker

Every wall has its other side, one visible, the other internal and hidden: home for rodents and insects, a passage for nocturnal noises; one open to the air, the other earthy, one a playground for shadows, the other all shadow. Two walls, visions divided: one open and enclosing, the other captive and contained - a cavity for darker thoughts.

To hang a work upon a wall is to engage more than its mere surface, for a wall is also a boundary which, by virtue of its verticality, confronts the eye and (when its continuity is broken) invites our deeper gaze to what lies beyond.

## les dorahy

Born Sydney 1950  
Lives and works in Booyong NSW



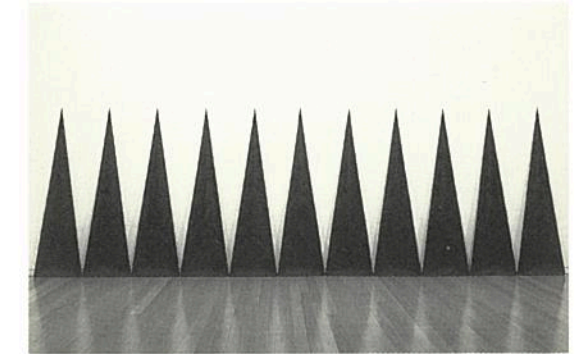
C. O. A. 1992 wood 121 x 97 x 60 cm  
Courtesy the Artist & Annandale Galleries Photo: Greg Weight

*C. O. A.* is one of a group of works concerned with the idea of the model. The title is in fact a model of a title which anagrammatically describes the function of this pseudo-apparatus.

A shelf or platform is sited high on the wall supporting a mechanical actuation which appears poised at the beginning of its cycle. Its position on and use of the wall is both phenomenological and evocative. Its height emphasises a mechanical potential, a moment about to occur, its shelf/stage, a separate zone on which a silent theatre of frozen action/reaction is taking place.

## anne graham

Born England 1949  
Lives and works in Sydney



*White Pointer* 1990 fibreglass, custom board, duco 150 x 49.5 cm (per unit)  
Courtesy Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery Photo: Tim Marshall

*White Pointer* uses the white downward row of negatives to become like sharks' teeth, turning the wall into a downward movement, while the blue objects at close quarters function as sculptural forms - carefully modelled to a degree of abstract clarity that functioned much like a minimalist series by an artist such as McCracken.

In this installation the space between the objects replicates the forms themselves, even the title refers to the negative image, but the pointing may as easily suggest a portcullis as a shark's jaws.

## joan grounds

Born U. S. A. 1939  
Lives and works in Sydney

"... all you'd have to do to lay the table would be to deposit the noble instrument on the cloth. And before you had time to say grace you'd have finished the meal..."

A. *Rebours*, J. K. Huysmans

## nola jones

Born Adelaide 1938  
Lives and works in Sydney

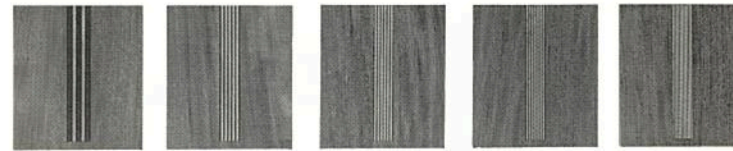


*Isabeau* 1993 mixed media 75 x 92 cm  
Collection of the Artist Photo: Jim Ashburn

My primary concern is with the articulation of a personal language derived through a dialogue between an inner imperative and the external processes.

## felicia kan

Born Hong Kong 1966  
Lives and works in Sydney



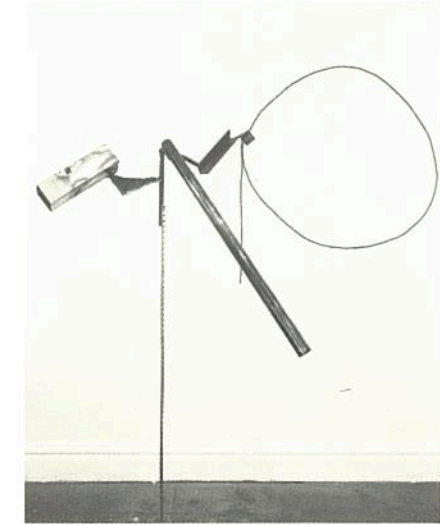
*Untitled (Timbre)* 1992/3 oil, woodstain, Letraset transfer, wood 28 x 24.1 x 3.5 each  
Courtesy Mori Gallery Photo: Felicia Kan

What is drawn pertains to a sense of logical progressions within parameters that are essentially abstract and regarded in relation to the materials and processes used. The manual means by which successions of stripes are applied on each of the five panels are indicated by scoring into the surface of the wood. Marks made by the hand contrast with the given precision of Letraset transfers, corresponding to a proximity of the natural wood grain to the functional geometry of the stripe.

Drawing requires a flat surface, the dimensionality of which is given as parallel to the wall.

## orest keywan

Born Marienbad, Czechoslovakia 1944  
Lives and works in Sydney

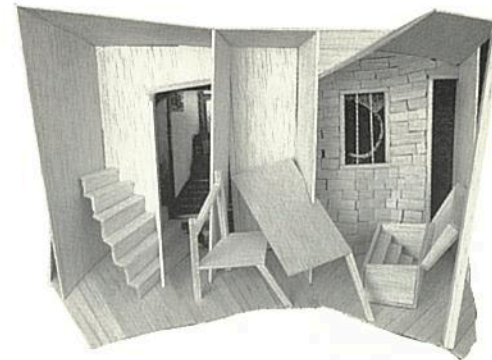


*Drawn Out* 1991/2 steel, stainless steel, aluminium 227 x 200 x 102 cm  
Courtesy Annandale Galleries Photo: Orest Keywan

A wall is the limit of the space in which we live in the round and the opening to another, the pictorial, in which different rules apply. A work which authentically exists at the juncture of these two realms straddles, questions, redefines and possibly even rides a real boundary.

bruce m<sup>c</sup>calmont

Born Sydney 1943  
Lives and works in Sydney

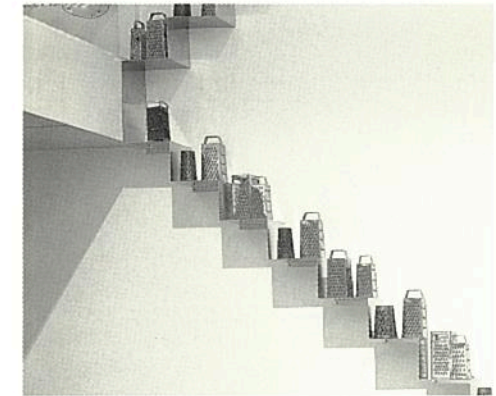


*Untitled* 1991/94 balsa wood 13 x 22.5 x 8 cm (each approx)  
Collection of the Artist Photo: Bruce McCalmont

The wall projects images  
The image is the precursor for a three dimensional object  
The object then comes off the wall and  
The object situates itself in the room  
The room has four walls  
The wall projects images  
A mark germinates an image that swirls and distorts  
A room begins to form, space is encompassed by  
A wall, that has  
A door, which leads to  
The infinity of other walls  
The wall projects images

ewen m<sup>c</sup>donald

Born New Zealand 1952  
Lives and works in Sydney



*Spiritual Mathematics (To the Grater Power Of...)* (detail) 1992 mixed media size variable  
Courtesy Mori Gallery Photo: courtesy the artist

the more a thing is repeated, the greater the variety  
and possibilities might be... the more a thing is repeated,  
the greater the variety and possibilities might be... the  
more a thing is repeated, the greater the variety and  
possibilities might be... the more a thing is repeated,  
the greater the variety and possibilities might be... the  
more a thing is repeated, the greater the variety and  
possibilities might be... the more a thing is repeated,  
the greater the variety and possibilities might be... the  
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possibilities might be... the more a thing is repeated,  
the greater the variety and possibilities might be... the  
more a thing is repeated, the greater the variety and  
possibilities might be... the more a thing is repeated,  
the greater the variety and possibilities might be...



## kathy temin

Born Sydney 1968  
Lives and works in Melbourne



*Green Problem* 1992 synthetic fur, canvas, paint, stuffing size variable - according to wall  
Courtesy the Artist & Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery Photo: Peter Akblyik

*Green Problem* consists of a number of separate repeated units, of which the shape that is repeated was originally taken from a pattern of a 'Roly-Poly Animal', in a soft toy book. *Green Problem* was an attempt to combine aspects of the popular animal body (the caterpillar), with formal concerns (working with modules and with the corner and floor space).

My original interest in the use of the corner to install work, is through looking at Vladimir Tatlin's *Corner Counter Relief*, 1915. This construction is made from industrial materials. The interest is in the work operating in between practices, where the relief is sculptural because of the way that it occupies the space but still relates to painting because of its relationship to the wall.

## john turier

Born Sydney 1954  
Lives and works in Newcastle



*Black Line Whip* (detail) 1993 wood, chert (stone), paper, collage, string, metal 210 x 15 x 103 cm  
Courtesy Coventry Gallery Photo: Coventry Gallery

*Black Line Whip* was one result inspired by an inner want to harness a range of wondrous potentials inherent in disparate materials, forms and movements. I have long been intrigued by kinetics, counterbalance, ratio and Dada poetry in image and word.

Using a domain predominantly the reserve of two-dimensional works threw up a whole range of new problems and answers. Not only does gravity become a different player but, with the wall a silent support and backdrop, shadows surprisingly take on a theatrical colouring.

## toni warburton

Born Sydney 1951  
Lives and works in Sydney



*Keys to Transactions: Diatom, Throat, Stalks* 1990 blown glass, moulded paper pulp, cast iron  
33 x 25 x 16 each Private Collection Photo: Kalev Maevali

### Recollection

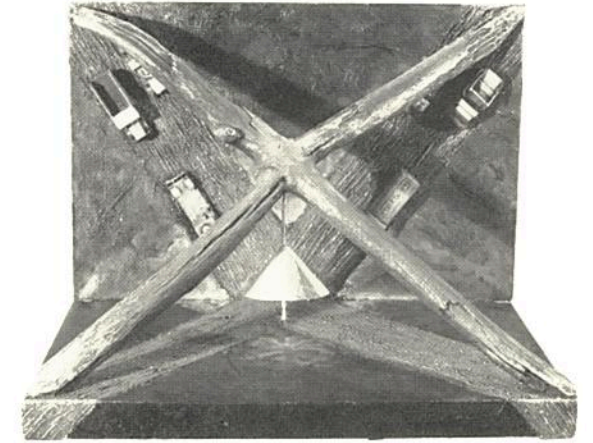
In the tableau called *Transactions* these keys hovered between object and physiognomy. Their function was to generate triangulated ricochets of spatial closure between the corresponding effigies and through their own affinities (alluding to the structural rhythms of the helix). The keys extended the gestures of the effigies as follows: *Stalks* to the *Spring*, *Diatom* to the *Pieta* and *Throat* to the *Drinker*.

Disembodied from that situation these keys may still evoke such ambiances, or simply represent the enigmas of unnarrated objects.

Weakened pulses may emanate between them and the effigies from the now disassembled tableau: a pieta in Annandale, a drinker in Darlinghurst, a spring in Marrickville.

## arthur wicks

Born Sydney 1937  
Lives and works in Wagga Wagga



*Intersection* 1990 mixed media 34.5 x 46 x 31 cm  
Courtesy Michael Nagy Fine Art Photo: Arthur Wicks

Is a wall simply a surface that reflects much deeper and, in some instances, more obscure notions than those that finally end up on them? How is it that objects "on the wall", more often than not, represent the FINAL statement rather than the more interesting processes that led to the work? Can a work on the wall involve the audience? Are real art works allowed to fall off the walls?

As an artist involved with performance work, I am interested in engaging the audience as broadly as possible. There are numerous references in this work and it is the task of the viewer to use whichever of these references they want to accept and then to generate his/her own story to make sense of it.

## list of works

### daniel cole

*Speak, Pipe, Pneumas* 1993/4  
mixed media  
350 x 210 x 5 cm  
Collection the Artist

### peter crocker

*Shepherd's Tale* 1993  
wire, stones  
100 x 20 x 13 cm  
Collection the Artist

*Pseudoflora* 1993  
wire, stone  
80 x 14 x 12 cm  
Collection the Artist

### les dorahy

*C. O. A.* 1992  
wood  
121 x 97 x 60 cm  
Courtesy the Artist & Annandale  
Galleries

### anne graham

*White Pointer* 1990  
fibreglass, custom board, duco  
150 x 49.5 cm (per unit)  
Courtesy Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

### joan grounds

*Portrait in Brown and Gold (with  
apologies to S. H.)* 1992  
mixed media  
48 x 62 cm  
Collection the Artist

### nola jones

*Isabeau* 1993  
mixed media  
75 x 92 cm  
Collection the Artist

*Pallas* 1994  
mixed media  
190 x 83 cm  
Collection the Artist

### felicia kan

*Untitled (Timbre)* 1992/3  
oil, woodstain, Letraset transfer, wood  
28 x 24.1 x 3.5 each  
Courtesy Mori Gallery

### orest keywan

*Drawn Out* 1991/2  
steel, stainless steel, aluminium  
227 x 200 x 102 cm  
Courtesy Annandale Galleries

### bruce m<sup>c</sup>calmont

*Untitled* 1991/94  
balsa wood  
13 x 22.5 x 8 cm (each approx)  
Collection the Artist

### ewen m<sup>c</sup>donald

*Spiritual Mathematics (To the Grater  
Power Of...)* 1992  
mixed media  
size variable  
Collection the Artist  
Courtesy Mori Gallery

### kathy temin

*Green Problem* 1992  
synthetic fur, canvas, paint, stuffing  
size variable - according to wall  
Courtesy the Artist & Roslyn Oxley9  
Gallery

### john turier

*Black Line Whip* 1993  
wood, chert (stone), paper, collage,  
string, metal  
210 x 15 x 103 cm  
Courtesy Coventry Gallery

### toni warburton

*Keys to Transactions: Diatom, Throat,  
Stalks* 1990  
blown glass, moulded paper pulp, cast iron  
33 x 25 x 16 each  
Private Collection

### arthur wicks

*Intersection* 1990  
mixed media  
34.5 x 46 x 31 cm  
Courtesy Michael Nagy Fine Art

*Littoral Zone Between High and Low Tide*  
1990

mixed media  
34 x 46 x 30.5 cm  
Courtesy Michael Nagy Fine Art

*(Uninhabited) Landscape and Rain Storm*  
1990

mixed media  
79 x 30.5 x 46 cm  
Courtesy Michael Nagy Fine Art

All measurements are in centimetres, height  
x width x depth

## **a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s**

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