

# LOS ANGELES IN THE SEVENTIES

The Fort Worth Art Museum  
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Norton Gallery and School of Art  
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An Interview with Hal Glicksman  
Edited by Marge Goldwater

special relationship to the movie industry. On the other hand, an artist involved with performance like Guy de Cointet, a native of France now living in Los Angeles, who still travels back and forth quite a bit, better typifies the situation. Cointet has moved from using a manipulated word image to a narrative to a full performance. This development has been internal rather than a result of dialogue with other artists. His early work was formal typography. One early drawing gives a clue to the origin of the early typographic works. The drawing is of words in tall gothic type. There is a horizontal split through the words in the middle of each letter. The bottom half is slid over the top half. Because of the extended character of the letters, they become mysterious elements instead of letters. He later published an entire book on the typography of these mysterious half-letter or split-letter elements. From there he worked with the idea of explaining these nonsensical texts with logical narrations which were nevertheless illogical when related to the text. *At Sunrise a Cry Was Heard* . . . a later performance piece, is like a short story which was read dramatically. The narrative refers to an abstract painting which is on stage, and does not depict what is being discussed. The continuing logical development of his work resulted in *Ethiopia*, a work with extended narration which becomes a play and purports to explain the props in the play, highly abstracted

sculptural elements. Meaning — not necessarily specific, correct or explanatory — is assigned to the formal sculpture, satisfying the need for words to go along with the work, satisfying those who want art to have definite import. Cointet's most recent work, as it has become much more elaborate, has moved fully into the realm of theater. It remains more related to art, however, in that the work stems from the dialogue with the props and the abstract nature of the props. The props' non-relatedness to their function as elements in the plan and their humorous bending of function to become chairs, tables, rocks, mountains, houses, etc., according to the narrative, also keep the work within the boundaries of art.

MG: Is Lloyd Hamrol's work, like that of the white room artists, closely related to the surrounding space?

HG: The first piece I did as a gallery director was a work by Lloyd Hamrol at Pomona College in 1969. I had seen a piece in his studio, a string piece with two squares floating one above the other about six feet on each side, made of red cord and held in place by tiny invisible cords so that they floated without visible means of

support. I asked him about moving it into a gallery, adopting a different space, but he said he had conceived it for where it was. Then I realized that the installation time for a work is always too short, a strain in terms of a work being modified to fit the existing space in so short a time, and that it would be better to let the artist work in the space for a longer amount of time and show the finished piece for a shorter period. So Hamrol had use of the gallery for six weeks and the final piece was on view only a week. He spent the rest of the time using the gallery as a workshop, as an experimental space, trying out various ideas.

There is a great deal of personal inspiration and also an organic growth to Hamrol's ideas as well as to the way his pieces look. Not only is his work organic in the sense of having soft, rounded forms (as opposed to hard-edge forms) and in its utilization of natural materials, but it is organic in its relation to the proportions of the human body. His sculptures are often meant to be climbed on, laid on, manipulated and experienced physically. He believes also in their social function in bringing people together. Sometimes, for instance, the work takes the form of rows of seats or an arena.

*Soft Wall*, the work in this exhibition, was first done in Seattle at the and/or Gallery, and serves as a model for a large scale work done at Artpark in upstate New

York in 1976. The interior pieces, of course, have been made with cotton bags and sand, but his idea for the outdoor works is to make a dry concrete mixture, from soil and cement, and pour it into the bags, making them concrete pillows. As Hamrol has pointed out, although *Soft Wall* will be virtually the same piece in this exhibition, it will never be quite the same because it is a contextual work. The specific quality of the space naturally changes the piece. In either situation, however, the work declares two kinds of space, one that is captured in the concave space, and the space outside, which declares a perimeter. The social ambience in the two different spaces varies considerably. It becomes necessary for one to enter the concave space to fully understand what the work is about. Hamrol has commented that "if somehow the nature of the work keeps the audience at a traditional and psychological distance from the work, then I feel it is not right." Hamrol's consideration of human scale, a constant which informs all his work, serves to enhance the viewer's experience of the piece and its use within the social context.