

# IN THE MATERIAL WORLD



**I**n *the Material World* is an exhibition that blurs and questions boundaries — between internal and external spaces, between art and life. The show emphasizes the Evanston Art Center's continuing mission to bring together artists who are at different points in their careers (but who have similar if not obvious sensibilities), as a catalyst for creating a resonating environment shaped by the collective interaction of work. Artists John Arndt, Paul Kass, Joan Livingstone and Paul Sacaridiz represent a unique overlap of three-dimensional disciplines — sculpture, installation, fiber — whose diversity is unified by a like-minded embrace of understated, utilitarian materials and forms placed in the service of altering the viewer's accepted relationship to their surroundings. The palpable quality of these artists' raw

**E V A N S T O N   A R T   C E N T E R**

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TOP: PAUL SACARIDIZ, *MARKER*, DETAIL, 2000, CAST WAX AND THREAD, 5' X 6' X 10'

BOTTOM: PAUL SACARIDIZ, *MARKER*, 2000, CAST WAX AND THREAD, 5' X 6' X 10'

materials — Gore-Tex nylon, drywall compound, vinyl, felt, wax, honey, epoxy rubber and resin — is crucial in establishing an inseparable relationship between their works' formal construction and the larger conceptual issues they address. It is this relationship that subliminally makes the viewer feel — if not immediately recognize — that their physical interactions with the environment are in a state of change. Consequently, these works are fueled by contradictions. Their materials and

forms are grounded in the definable weight of physical reality, yet are utilized to create zones of impermanence and transition. Entering the Art Center's first floor galleries, one initially notices Paul Sacaridiz's shimmering red and golden installation, *Marker*, framed against the bay windows of the cloistered, sunny space of the Octagon Gallery. From a distance, this hanging mass of multiple components resembles the precious intricacies of a chandelier, echoing the elaborate ornamental moldings surrounding the gallery's glass doors. However, upon closer inspection, the viewer sees that *Marker's* elegant veil is created out of hundreds of humble carpenter's plumb bobs, cast in yellow wax and suspended from red thread in concentric rings of varying heights. For this emerging artist, symbols of construction and decoration have become a vocabulary for addressing the relationships between truth and fiction in man's constructed worlds. In *Marker's* rhythmic, volumetric articulation of space, Sacaridiz reflects on man's self-deceptions in believing he can create a stable existence in a world where physical laws are, ultimately, beyond his control.

The tug of gravity — which is an unseen, yet significant presence in Sacaridiz's work — is accentuated upon entering the Wieghardt



TOP: PAUL KASS, *PAINTED NICHE*, 2002, VINYL, WOOD, 23' X 47' X 1.5'

BOTTOM: JOHN ARNDT, *GRAY GROUND CLOTH*, 2000, GORE-TEX COATED NYLON, 65' X 92'

are filled with quiet contradictions as one realizes that the very material that is meant to allow immersion in nature in reality creates a distinct separation from it. Arndt's tarps are symbols of man's flawed technical resourcefulness, allowing him to survive the elements, while displacing him from the environment.

Displacement is dramatically felt when looking across the hall from Arndt's tarps to the mass of a larger-



than-life white sphere filling the doorway of the Art Center's North Gallery. Constructed by Paul Kass from a wood armature covered with drywall compound, the sphere grows in scale as one enters the gallery where its 8-foot-diameter presence seems to voraciously consume breathable air. This emerging artist has developed a body of work that uses unglamorous, working-class materials as part of architectural interventions to address the often disorienting isolation of interiors. Using the large sphere to press the visitor into corners of the gallery one normally doesn't inhabit, Kass builds on the cumulative anxiety generated from this reorientation. One becomes acutely aware of the awkwardness of their own body in a space that refuses to be dominated by human presence. Where Arndt's tarps convey one's ability to protect themselves, Kass' work reveals the naked vulnerability of the individual in a world that never is as comfortable as we believe we can make it. For all the artists, this ability to challenge one's sense of equilibrium remains at the essence of works that begin in the material world and ultimately take us beyond it.

John Brunetti

Curator, *In the Material World*