

Michael O'Malley's *Tatlin's Dream* alluded to the Russian Constructivist's corner counter reliefs that placed "real materials into real space." *Spark*, a large sprawling chandelier, introduced a home-grown variation. In *Spark*, materials generally used in the construction of single-family dwellings (carved brick, hollow core doors, welded steel, newspaper, house paint, and glue) replaced traditional faceted crystals. Reflecting the superficiality of ornament for the modest elements intrinsic to the actual structure of the home resulted in an explosion of architectural space mirrored in the title's succinct moniker.

With the opening of the Seattle Art Museum's nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park, visitors have an opportunity to experience works that both refer and respond to nature. "New Sculpture Survey" offered an interestingly timed counterpoint, with a number of artists carefully considering the different facets of interior space.

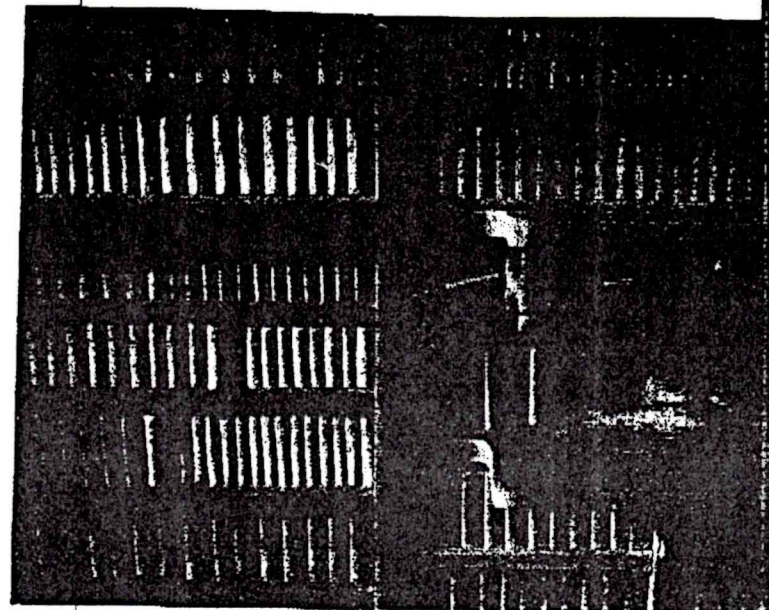
— Suzanne Beal

MONTREAL

Guillaume Lachapelle and Kim Adams

Circa

For all their utilitarian design, Guillaume Lachapelle's maquette environments have a tinge of surreal incongruity. What makes them interesting is precisely the sense of mystery built into their structures: they are dream-like and poetic, fictional worlds with functional allusions that rely on structure and engineering. While these works delight in making things look like they have a function, their real purpose is to present bizarre paradoxes involving aspects of pragmatism and production. Sometimes these worlds are absurd and theatrical, other times they hint at social and religious questions. Still in his 20s, Lachapelle is learning the language of his own version of



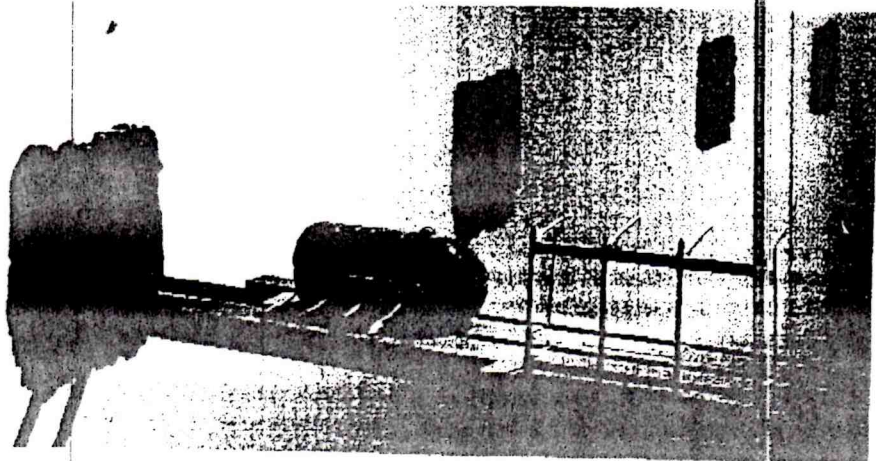
Surrealism as he goes along. Atmosphere develops in the junctures and set-ups of these fragmentary staged scenes. The mechanisms, rail trestles, and engineered platforms all convince us with their structural solidity, yet many of them lead nowhere, pieces of a longer sequence of which we know nothing.

We see, for instance, a train emerging out of a tunnel in a wall. In another piece, we see a series of

individuals on different floors of a freestanding platform engaged in various activities. These scenarios sculpted in miniature play on and with various levels of interpretation. It seems that Lachapelle's intended purpose is not unlike Magritte's in *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*. In one particular maquette, the man on the uppermost level appears to be dropping a sphere down an opening to the platform below. A man on the

lower platform seems to be receiving the spheres. Where he will place them afterwards is not at all clear. Another fanciful and fantastic work is tinged with an atmosphere akin to Borges's short story "The Library of Babel" (1941). A man sleeps on his side in a niche set within a book-filled environment. It is as if the material manifestation of a potential reality were itself somehow real. These dream envi-

Above: Guillaume Lachapelle, *Manèges #8*, 2004-06. Wood, detail. Below: Guillaume Lachapelle, *Manèges #13*, 2004-06. Wood and polyester resin, installation view.



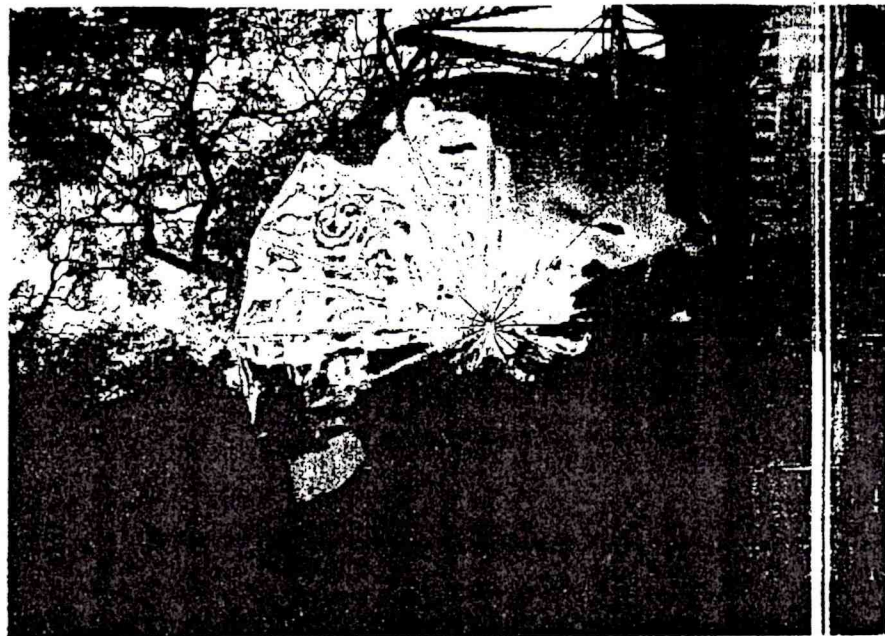
David Lamelas, *Time as Activity* (Buenos Aires), 2006. Polyester resin, fiberglass, stainless steel rods, and mirror sheeting, 4 meters diameter.

ronments work because they are precious and small scale, they could be infinitely remade because they are products of imagination, just like the catalogue in Borges's library, which continually expands with the addition of thousands of false catalogues, as well as proofs of the falsity of those catalogues, and even proofs of the falsity of the true catalogues. Lachapelle's library made of tiny wooden books becomes an entire world, a library of libraries.

Still other works delight in building trestle bridges, with rails atop them. They hang in space like suspended metaphors, waiting for some connecting context. One includes a flower and an air vent; another features a tree whose branches connect to and support a trestle that comes from and goes nowhere. There is even an existential corner with a series of posts and shelves—nothing more, or less. The elements in Lachapelle's painstakingly modeled universe conjure a metaphysical world, reinforced by the untreated color of the wood, which recalls a Surrealist dream-world quite effectively.

Another section of the gallery was dedicated to the maquettes of Ontario-based Kim Adams, an artist whose constructions inspired Lachapelle. Here, Adams presented the latest in bizarre new breeds of hybrid vehicles, including a *Stug Truck* (1996), *Cheese Trucks I and III* (1998), *Tank Viewer II* (1998), and an *Earth Bubble* (1996). Form follows function in this ever-evolving, always motorized universe.

Obviously Lachapelle and Adams are having fun building their dystopian, utopian, surreal models. As constructions, their works become metaphors for how we



think, build, and construct things. The fact that neither artist seeks a purist function or a perfect universe reminds us of Camus's comment that "the society based on production is only productive, not creative."

—John K. Grande

Buenos Aires

David Lamelas

MALBA (Museo de Arte

Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires)

Recent visitors to MALBA were surprised at the museum's entrance by an enormous sculpture made by the Argentine artist David Lamelas. Best known for his work in film and video and his conceptualist sculpture of the '60s and '70s, Lamelas was born in Buenos Aires in 1946 and studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts. In 1968, he went to London on a scholarship and studied at St. Martin's School of Arts. In 1976 he moved to Los Angeles, and by 1986 he had settled in New York. All through the '90s he lived in New York, Brussels, and Berlin, and since 1999 he has spent his time in Buenos Aires, Los Angeles, and Paris. Lamelas's participation in individual

and group exhibitions in the most important art capitals of the world, as well as several retrospectives, proves him to be one of the most interesting messengers of contemporary art; this could be clearly seen in his piece placed at MALBA's gates.

Responding to the security issues that plague not only Buenos Aires, but every big city, Lamelas gave a statement of sculptural proportions: a "surveillance mirror" that reflected and acted as a guardian, controlling everything that happened around the museum. Unlike Kapoor's *Sky Mirror* at Rockefeller Center, which brought the sky down to the ground, Lamelas's *Time As Activity* (Buenos Aires) concentrated on surrounding action. Four meters in diameter, this sculpture made of polyester resin with fiberglass, rigid stainless steel rods, and mirror sheeting became the most recent manifestation of Lamelas's life-long endeavor to relate time, as the vehicle for action, to urban and architectural structures. Always demanding an active public, Lamelas's work emphasizes the importance of ideas and concepts. When he was invited by the museum

to produce a piece, he thought that placing a camera to capture reality wasn't as good an idea as trying to capture movement itself. He couldn't have made a better choice to summarize the aims of his trilogy "Time as Activity," begun in 1969, which he filmed in different European cities (starting with Düsseldorf) in random daily situations, always seeking the work of art not as an object but in relation to surrounding space.

Urban life was the soul of his mirror, which transformed "Time as Activity" into magnificent proportions. It wasn't a traditional sculpture. According to the artist, "It didn't glorify anyone or commemorate anything, it was pure presence, an anti-monument." The kind of spectator that Lamelas always aspired to was once again part of his scenario: viewers found themselves inside the mirror while walking toward the entrance, suddenly stopped by a "big eye" that made evident not only the sometimes cruel and lawful reality surrounding us, but—as well—because, whether we like it or not, we are part of it.

—María Carolina Escobar