

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

527 West 29th Street New York NY 10001

Tel 212-925-6190 Fax 212-334-9139

info@davidnolangallery.com

www.davidnolangallery.com



MAD. SQ. ART 2009

MEL KENDRICK: *MARKERS*

September 17 – December 31, 2009

Presented by the Madison Square Park Conservancy

MARKERS

The five new sculptures that make up Mel Kendrick's *Markers* exhibition in Madison Square Park are at once radically new and quintessentially Kendrick; on the one hand a bold departure from the artist's characteristic use of wood as his primary medium, on the other hand a natural evolution of the formal motifs and self-evident process that have come to be synonymous with his work. Since the mid-1970s, Kendrick has developed a formidable reputation for sculptures born of the play between addition and subtraction, destruction and creation. In Kendrick's hands, blocks of raw wood are sliced and gutted, their interiors ingeniously reconfigured and reconstituted atop the remnant shell of the wood block from which they originated. The resulting geometric abstractions elegantly explore themes of interiority and externality; the dramatic construction of positive and negative volume revealing a holistic creative process that leaves the impression that "the material has given birth to its own artwork." (*ArtNews*, 2008)

In *Markers*, Kendrick for the first time applies the same aesthetic and procedural rubric to cast stone, a medium necessitating a more cerebral and studied creative process in contrast to the visceral physicality of working with wood. This novel material endows Kendrick's five new works—each standing more than ten feet tall and arrayed across the expansive Oval Lawn of historic Madison Square Park—with a uniquely imposing monumentality and architectonic quality on a commanding scale that echoes the architectural grandeur of their home at the heart of the Flatiron District. The works' bold black and white striation expands the vocabulary of Kendrick's multifaceted language of positive and negative spatial techniques, applying this visual dichotomy to a sculptural landscape that includes a remarkable variety of forms and exquisitely detailed surface treatments. Ever the process-oriented sculptor, each sensuous curve, rough-hewn void and gently rippling plane in Kendrick's *Markers* series bears the fossil memory and kinetic aura of the artist's sure-handed touch.

MEL KENDRICK

Mel Kendrick was born in Boston, MA, and lives and works in New York City. He received a B.A. from Trinity College in Hartford, CT and a M.A. from Hunter College in New York. For more than three decades Kendrick has been producing a sculptural oeuvre that reveals an obsessive appreciation for the intricacies of his material and highlights an engaged and laborious creative process. The striking sculptural works that result constitute a philosophical, rather than formal abstraction; deftly deploying a variety of techniques, forms and color treatments to elegantly address themes of wounding and repair, interiority and externality, positive and negative volume.

Kendrick has exhibited extensively and to great acclaim since the mid-1970s at institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the Brooklyn Museum, New York, among many others. His work is included in many significant public collections, including those of the Art Institute of Chicago; the Brooklyn Museum; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art. He has been the recipient of several awards, including the Francis J. Greenburger Award and the Academy Award for Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is represented by David Nolan Gallery.

MAD. SQ. ART

Mad. Sq. Art is the free gallery without walls presented by the Madison Square Park Conservancy in the historic 6.2-acre park located at 5th Avenue and 23rd Street. In 2009, Mad. Sq. Art has also exhibited *The Park*, a site-specific series of short films by Shannon Plumb, and *Flooded Chambers Maid*, a mixed media installation by Jessica Stockholder.

Major Support for Mad. Sq. Art is provided by Founding Partners Agnes Gund and Anonymous. Substantial support is provided by Ronald A. Pizzuti, Toby Devan Lewis and the Henry Luce Foundation. Support for *Markers* is generously provided by David Nolan Gallery, Gail Monaghan, Francis Williams, Raymond Leary, Wynn Kramarsky and Ted Poretz. This project is supported in part with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Mad. Sq. Art is made possible by the leadership and generosity of the many friends of the Madison Square Park Conservancy.

MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

The Madison Square Park Conservancy, a public/private partnership with New York City Parks & Recreation, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping historic Madison Square Park bright, beautiful and full of free cultural programs. For more information, please visit madisonsquarepark.org.

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Media Contact:

Please direct all press inquires to:
Sam Rauch
Art Coordinator
Madison Square Park Conservancy:
212.538.7042
rauch@madisonsquarepark.org