



PARRISH ART MUSEUM

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ALAN SHIELDS: IN MOTION, AN EXHIBITION EMPHASIZING THE ARTIST'S CONNECTION TO MOVEMENT AND DANCE, IS ON VIEW AT THE PARRISH ART MUSEUM THROUGH JANUARY 19, 2015

A Special Dance Performance by Renowned Choreographer Stephen Petronio Complements Works in the Galleries



Installation view of the exhibition, Alan Shields: In Motion. Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York. October 26, 2014 to January 19, 2015. Photo: Gary Mamay.

WATER MILL, NY 1/7/2015—From October 26, 2014 through January 19, 2015, the Parrish Art Museum presents the exhibition *Alan Shields: In Motion*, featuring works by the American artist who engaged in a wide-ranging exploration of non-traditional materials and techniques, and whose work was influenced by his avid interest in architecture, theater, and dance. *Alan Shields: In Motion*, conceived by guest curator Jill Brienza, features sculpture, installations, works on paper and canvas, and stop-frame animations by Shields, who lived and worked on Shelter Island, New York. A special dance performance by Stephen Petronio Company that was choreographed with the exhibition's signature work, *Maze* (1981–1982), as the set, is also on view in the gallery.

Shields, described by critic Robert Hughes as “a brilliant bricoleur,” came to the fore in the 1970s with his stained canvases presented in three dimensions. His work was simultaneously of the moment and completely outside the trends of the times. According to Brienza, “Shields’s individuality, craft, and experimentation stood out in its time and continue to resonate today.”

Shields’s creative approach, combining found materials in radiant assemblage with sound aesthetic foundations, has been influential to a number of younger artists. “It is especially compelling to present

Alan Shields: In Motion simultaneously with the work of Steven and William Ladd which opened at the Museum on the same date," said Parrish Art Museum Director Terrie Sultan. "While these artists come to their creativity from very different points of view, they share many points of intersection. There is a performance aspect to each artist's work, founded in dance and motion, as well as a desire to connect various disciplines within the overall context of their work."

The exhibition at the Parrish, including works from private collections and the Shields estate, focuses on the theme of motion, particularly as it relates to dance. "This is the first exhibition to explore movement and interaction rather than form or medium in Shields's work," said Brienza.

The cornerstone of *Alan Shields: In Motion* is *Maze*, Shields's largest and most ambitious piece—one that functions simultaneously as a sculpture, a room, and a theatrical installation. Like two other works in the show, *Dance Bag* (1985) and *Ajax* (1972), *Maze* calls for participation through immersion: Viewers are encouraged to walk over, under, around, and through the pieces. Shields's relationship to dance is further contextualized by works on paper and canvas in the exhibition.

In addition, *Alan Shields: In Motion* includes video, sound, wearable pieces, and a selection of rarely seen stop-frame animation works including *Balletfire* (2005) and *Birth of a Nation* (2003), presented sequentially on a large flat screen monitor in the galleries. *Devil, Devil, Love* (1970), a large-scale lattice piece from the Parrish's permanent collection, demonstrates Shields's non-traditional use of materials as well as the importance of these materials to his notions of movement.

Related Program by Stephen Petronio Company:

A special program, *Into the Maze*, a collaboration between Shields's work and the Stephen Petronio Company as conceptualized by Brienza, took place Friday, November 7, and on Saturday, November 8. A video of the performance now runs continuously in the gallery.

"*Into the Maze* is a unique multi-disciplinary experience that reinforces the opportunities available from Shields's use of negative space," said Brienza. This immersive performance, choreographed by Petronio, is set to music by Tom Laurie that was inspired by a melody written by Shields.

About Alan Shields

Alan Shields was born in 1944 and raised on his family's farm in Herington, Kansas. At Kansas State University, Shields changed his focus from engineering to theater to art, before moving to New York in 1968. Shields gained prominence in the New York art world in the 1970s after a show at the Paula Cooper Gallery in 1969. In the 1990s, he moved from painting on canvas to working with non-traditional materials like painted beads, and started printmaking and creating animation. In 1971, Shields purchased a house on Shelter Island, New York, that became his permanent residence within a year. He became a ferry captain on the North Ferry, between Shelter Island and Greenport. Alan Shields's work is in the collections of major New York museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art; as well as the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Tate Collection in London, among others. In 2007, the Parrish Art Museum presented a solo exhibition of Shields's work, *Stirring Up the Waters*. Shields died in 2005 at the age of 61 at his home on Shelter Island.

About Curator Jill Brienza

Curator, producer, and writer Jill Brienza curated *Alan Shields: A Survey*, a traveling museum exhibition of the artist's work. For over ten years, Brienza was the director of The Roger Smith Gallery in Manhattan, presenting a multidisciplinary program that showcased works by artists such as Peter Fend, architect Ken Smith, and playwright/performer Sarah Jones. She has written on contemporary art for publications including *Flash Art* and *Art Basel*, and consults with corporations on the development of art-related initiatives and with individual artists on career development. Based in New York City and Shelter Island, New York, Brienza serves as an advisor to Hunter College's Arts Across the Curriculum initiative and serves on the boards of Creative Time, Independent Curators International, and the Stephen Petronio Dance Company.

Related Programs

The Curator's View: Jill Brienza on Alan Shields
Sunday, November 2, 11am

Into the Maze: Stephen Petronio Company
Friday, November 7, 6 pm
Saturday, November 8, 1-4 pm, 20-minute performances on the hour

Sponsorship

Alan Shields: In Motion is made possible, in part, by the generous support of the Joseph and Sylvia Slifka Foundation, James Keith Brown and Eric G. Diefenbach, Van Doren Waxter, Barbara Toll/The Evelyn Toll Family Foundation, Jacqueline Brody, Barbara Nessim and Jules Demchick, Cynthia Hostetler and Nicholas Ulanov, Robin and Fred Seegal, Richard A. Smith, Michèle and Steven Pesner, Patricia Birch, Joa Baldinger and Heiner Friedrich, Beau R. Ott and Anna Bogatin, Max Pine, and Janet Roach.

About the Parrish Art Museum

Inspired by the natural setting and artistic life of Long Island's East End, the Parrish Art Museum illuminates the creative process and how art and artists transform our experiences and understanding of the world and how we live in it. The Museum fosters connections among individuals, art, and artists through care and interpretation of the collection, the presentation of exhibitions, publications, educational initiatives, programs, and artists-in-residence. The Parrish is a center for cultural engagement, an inspiration and destination for the region, the nation, and the world.

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