

The Space @ Media Triangle

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Daniel Rothbart: Begging Bowls + Photographs

November 10th through December 8th 2002
Reception Sunday, November 10 from 5-7pm

My Begging Bowls project began in Rome in 1993. I made eighteen low bronze vessels that I carried into the university neighborhood of San Lorenzo and photographed. My purpose was to establish relationships with places and people that were in some way conditioned by Begging Bowl sculptures (the process was known as Semiotic Street Situations). Since then I have photographed bowls in numerous American and European environments. Reactions to my project have varied widely. Carabinieri in Rome and FBI agents on Wall Street after 9.11 thought I was a terrorist planting rather unusual bombs. The most satisfying reactions were from young children in Italy and France who responded to the bowls with playful curiosity and incorporated the bowls into their games.

The Space @ Media Triangle is pleased to present an exhibition of sculpture and photographs by Daniel Rothbart. A continuing series, the artist's inspiration was part of a spiritual process of contemplation in making the work which began in mystical Judaism and migrated to incorporate Buddhist philosophy.

Rothbart's use of these bowls metaphorically brings into play the reciprocity of 'seeking and finding.' The series exhibited involved the creation of 12 cast aluminum vessels, which are designed in unique symmetrical shapes with a distinctive small raised foot. Rothbart took them with him on numerous journeys and photographed them in diverse social and cultural conditions and he chose to reenact Manet's classic work "Luncheon on the Grass" in France.

The photographs evoke a gentle laughter, and good humor pervades the series of 33 photographs chosen for this exhibition. They give a living image to a fundamental philosophical observation, that cause and effect are beyond the knowable, and what we receive from the universe may be generous or terribly hard. This concept sustains the joyful elegance of the work.

The Buddhist practice of begging is an ancient form of human striving and marks the person of a devoted monk or ascetic, who in seeking truth is respected as a vehicle for purity and spiritual discipline. He has abandoned the societal forms of worldly engagement that result in the acquisition of property, and must be sustained by the societal matrix. In Buddhist cultures today, young men and women study the scriptures and live as monks most often in monasteries; the wandering ones live by what they receive in their begging bowls. Whatever they are given is taken for spiritual nourishment.

After spending the day begging in town
I now sit peacefully under a cliff in the evening cool
Alone, with one robe and one bowl—
The life of a Zen monk is truly the best
Ryokan

Daniel Rothbart studied sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design and Columbia University. He held a Fulbright Hays Fellowship in Italy, a USIS Project Grant, a New York Foundation for the Arts grant, a La Napoule Art Foundation Residency in France, and a residency at the Herzeliya Artist's Residence in Israel. Rothbart has exhibited widely in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, where his work is represented in public and private collections. Rothbart is the author of two books and has worked as the contributing Associate Editor of NYArts magazine and its European imprint BerlinerKunst since 1998.

The Space @ Media Triangle is located at 640 Broadway @ Bleecker St. NYC
Open by Appointment Please Call ~ L. Brandon Krall @ 212.673.6099