

**the lab**  
gallery

the roger smith hotel . 501 lexington avenue . new york, new york . 10017 .

MAY 25 - JUNE 3

# LES JEUX SONT FAITS

SCULPTURE AND MEDIA INSTALLATIONS BY **DANIEL ROTHBART**  
CURATED BY **ENRICO PEDRINI**

**OPENING RECEPTION FRIDAY MAY 26TH, 630-9PM**



**Daniel Rothbart** is an American artist of the younger generation, whose interests are not limited to a formal investigation of the language of art, but extend to new fields of endeavor. He is an acute observer of cultural systems and environments that interact with contemporary art. Through his studio work and the written word, Rothbart has helped to shape a new direction for American art that remains distinct from European issues and concerns. In a refreshingly new way, he affirms the need to explore religious, social historical, and cultural values in a multi-ethnic, highly specialized society.

Jewish mysticism influenced the development of post-war American art, and in Rothbart's work cabbalistic symbolism is transformed into the basis of a personal mythology. Rothbart's work creates a new paradigm, in which conceptual art ceases to be self-referential art for art and rather becomes a cultural drive that allows new potential and meaning to emerge. Myth becomes a dynamic collective memory that allows new attitudes toward creative discourse to take form, and at the same time focuses renewed attention on the need for humanity to affirm its presence and identity.

Rothbart's sculpture embodies a poetical surrealism drawn from the realm of myth, and his imagery develops out of the historical sedimentation of life experience and scholarship. His fantastic world of myth prompts one to reconsider the sacred as a point of interaction where icons and symbols converge and undergo changes of meaning.

Rothbart's work opposes currents in contemporary art bound to irreversibility in science (information superhighways, genetics and cloning), but is decidedly timely.

Semiotic Street Situations, a term invented by Rothbart, becomes the stage on which symbolic, social, and cultural exchanges occur. Rothbart always develops relationships between individuals and between people and objects. In his recent collaborative performance work, participants animate his theater of life and culture through interaction with vessels. In the popular imagination his vessels become ever-changing signifiers that shape cultural identities and embody spiritual aspirations and emotional longings.

For "Les jeux sont faits" at the Lab Gallery, he explores forms related to the theme of chance and indeterminacy. Likening artists to gamblers, with a common penchant for risk-taking and gaming, Rothbart exhibits sculptural objects derived from the shape of Fortune's Wheel. These wall pieces also share kindred elements with the world of nature, hearkening back to the theme of branching present in the artists sculpture in aluminum. Projected on the wall is a video loop from the "Meditation/Mediation" series that was realized in France this March. It depicts Fortune, personified as a woman, casting dice from a vessel sculpture and descending a Belle Epoque staircase. Two concepts are juxtaposed in this video work. Meditation seems the opposite of mediation. The goal of meditation, however, could be characterized as attaining a state of inner peace. In "Meditation/Mediation," this is realized through a process of mediation between the body and the spirit.

**Enrico Pedrini**, Curator.

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*The Roger Smith Lab Gallery is a project based exhibition space located in one of the liveliest business sections of New York City. Sponsored by **The Roger Smith Hotel**, **The Lab** is a high traffic, fast paced, converted "storefront" that features conceptual work and provides a venue for experimental national and international artists and curators and their ideas. **The Lab Gallery** specializes in ten-day exhibitions. For more information, call 212-339-2092, or email [rogersmitharts@rogersmith.com](mailto:rogersmitharts@rogersmith.com).*

*Matthew Semler, Artistic Director.*

*D. Dominick Lombardi, Curatorial Advisor.*

**THE GALLERY IS LOCATED ON THE CORNER OF 47<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND LEXINGTON AVENUE . GALLERY HOURS ARE FROM 12NOON TO 7PM WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY OR BY APPOINTMENT . 212 . 339 . 2092**