



IL PONTE



Daniel Rothbart  
**Music of the Spheres**  
Curated by Enrico Pedrini

Opening Reception: Friday May 23  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Galleria Il Ponte is pleased to present "Music of the Spheres" an exhibition of new sculpture and performance work by American artist Daniel Rothbart. The exhibition opens on Friday May 23 with an opening reception from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and runs through June 20, 2008.

Both a scholar and an artist, Rothbart's work heralds a departure from self-reference "de l'art pour l'art," opening the way for new functions, potential and directions in conceptual art. Myth and memory become dynamic points of departure, reinforcing spirituality as a way to formalize new cultural discourse. Jewish mysticism influenced the development of post-war American art, and in this artist's work, it forms the basis of a personal mythology.

Rothbart's sculpture embodies a surreal poetic 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 (genetics and cloning) and information superhighways, but is decidedly timely. Semiotic Street Situations, a term invented by Rothbart, becomes the stage where symbolic, social, and cultural exchanges occur and the street defines a metaphorical space of rapports and relationships between people in movement.

Governed by neither forms nor rules, Rothbart's art grows out of an intuitive process, which supplants representation and the simple appropriation of nature or reality. Memory in this artist's work is neither reactionary nor unduly private, but grows out of Rothbart's need to bury his hands in sediment of identity and culture. To this end, he carries twelve vessel sculptures in metal of differing dimensions when he travels all over the world. The vessels are arranged in tableaux and documented (as well as mediated) with photography. In the words of Carla Subrizi, "The objects, thanks to the intervention of unpredictable outside factors, are filled with transient meanings that open them to new interpretations and effectively shift their meaning as signifiers."

On many occasions the artist provokes interaction with the vessels, be it with people he invites to collaborate or with members of the public who spontaneously respond to the work. Rothbart, who calls this project Meditation/Mediation, documents these encounters with video and photography. The interaction between collaborators and the vessel sculptures, which are sounded with a metal striker, forms the premise of each work. Rothbart furnishes the sculpture and mans a videocamera to document each vignette, paradoxically liberating and conditioning the creativity of each participant. The elements of "meditation" and "mediation" enter into dialectic with one another, as meditation outwardly 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

"Music of the Spheres" features new sculpture for the wall and floor by Daniel Rothbart. The exhibition takes its name from an idea in Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy that was inherited from Pythagoras. It refers to geometry, music, mysticism, Meditation/Mediation and Dante's beloved city of Florence. On the May 23 at 7:30 p.m. there will be a series of live Meditation/Mediation interventions in the gallery. Artist / collaborators include Alessandro Castiglioni (Gallarate 1984), Zoè Gruni (Pistoia 1982), Renato Ranaldi (Florence 1941) and Mimmo Roselli (Rome 1952).