

The Uninvited

Curated by Stephen Westfall

Bill Barrette
Rico Espinet
Brian Wood

Apex Art

291 Church Street New York, New York 10013

March 10 - April 15, 1995

Curating a show is like brainstorming. You try out various combinations of artists in the hopes of arriving at an arresting balance of imagery that makes a point or adumbrates a feeling that bridges their work without undermining their individual concerns. Sometimes a combination falls into place in a deeply satisfying way without having a particular rationale worked out beforehand. That's what happened when I was mulling over the work of Bill Barrette, Rico Espinet and Brian Wood. There is an evidentiary silence common to their work that is difficult to summarize because they each evoke this quality in a distinct manner.

The photographic work of Bill Barrette and Brian Wood conceives the print as another interior, whether or not the image itself represents an indoor space. Both artists house or imbed the print in a larger apparatus; in Barrette's case an iconic incasement that physically projects the image further into the physical world than an ordinary frame and which also provides the functional depth necessary to mount the various lenses he uses to float fragments of an image

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Designed by Gülizar Çepođlu, Istanbul

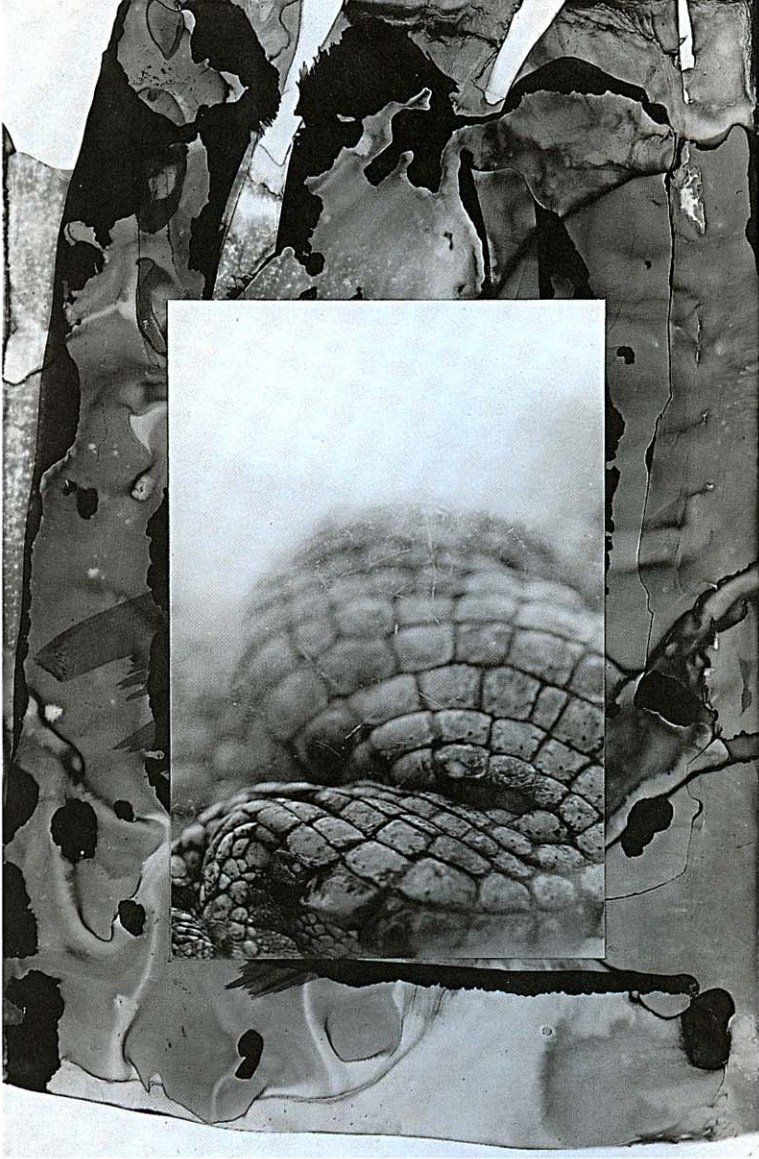
Printed by İyi Matbaacılık, Istanbul

and to create quiet superimpositions that startle in retrospect, as they linger in the mind. Wood mounts his photographs in the middle of larger gestural ink wash paintings on mylar which, though abstract, are reminiscent in light and texture of filmic close-ups of geological and botanical textures. Wood's prints emerge out of their background washes with an understated amplification of clarity that suggests a continuance with the field rather than a rupture.

Rico Espinet is not a photographer at all, but his installations possess the heightened sense of the placement of objects, their textures and luminosities, that we find in the long exposures of the studios of such artists as Brancusi and Morandi, photographs which have woven themselves into the story of modern art as much as the artists' work. Espinet's work also has a documentary feel to it, as though his forms –most of which are fabricated specifically for each piece– were artifacts in tableaux recreating scenes of metaphysical or alchemical transubstantiation. There is a casual but clear formal relationship between Barrette's and Espinet's use of directed light to enhance the drama of objecthood in their work, and we should also note their shared taste for the machine-age style of the Modern. But there is a deeper effect at work in the production of all three artists that I hope this exhibition will illuminate.

Between the site of the artwork and the place evoked by the artifact of the photograph or fabricated object is a slippage that steers the track of memory away from actual place and event to a territory of reverie. Perhaps this fissure is the source of the silence I alluded to at the beginning of this brief essay. Such a silence is attended by a sense of waiting, of a moment yet to be fulfilled. If a photograph is a trace of the real and a collection of apparently utilitarian objects a manifestation of the concrete, then why the strange air of expectancy in this work, as though another event pertaining to these artifacts has yet to happen or may be happening beneath our notice? Like a ghost that comes with the summer house, this "uninvited" presence is the real imaginative space of this work, the agency by which the quotidian and literal are transformed into radiant poetry. I invite viewers to enjoy the interplay among the different ways in which Barrette, Espinet and Wood each make a home for the uninvited.

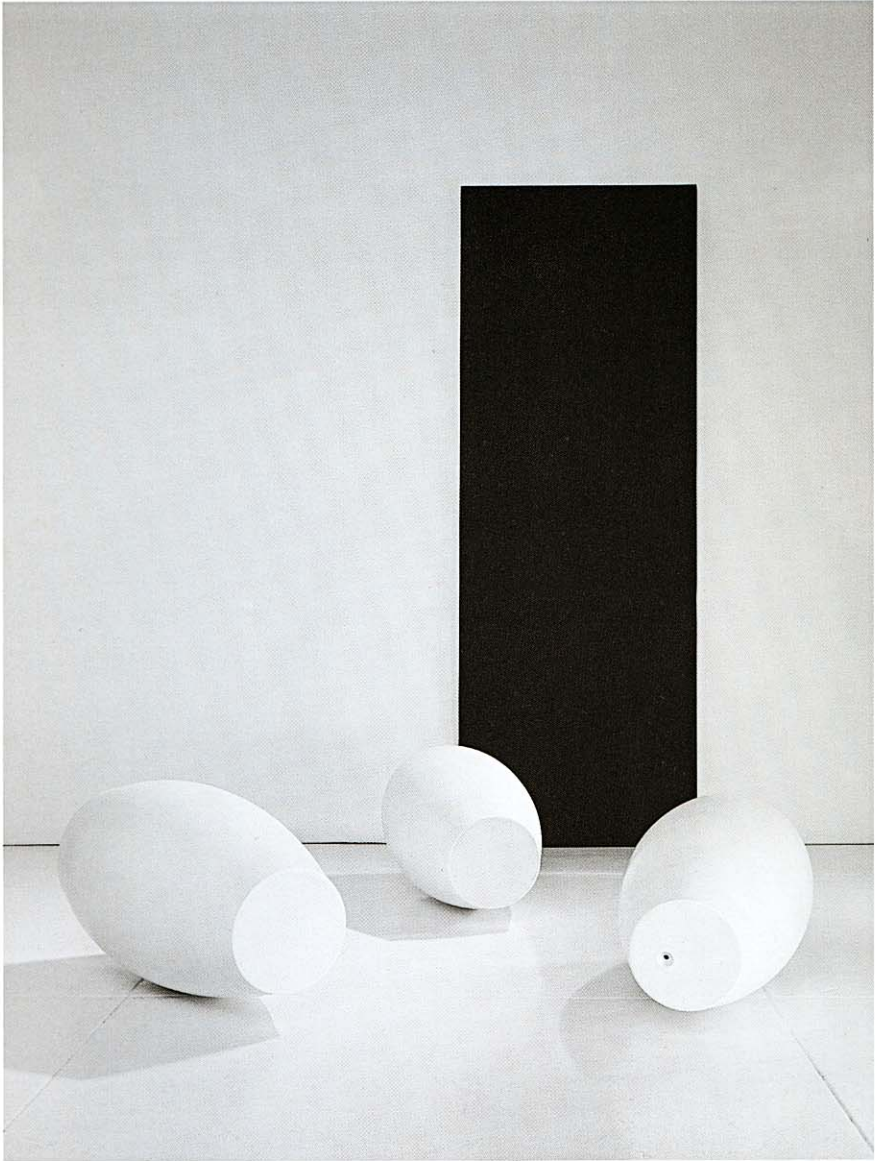
Stephen Westfall



Brian Wood
"Untitled", 1994
Ink and photograph on mylar
17,5 x 11,5 inches



Bill Barrette
"Burning Building \neq 2", 1993
Photographs, lens, glass, wood
19 x 26 x 35 inches



Rico Espinet
"The Wound and the Eye", 1995
Wood and slate
96 x 96 x 96 inches