Lisson Gallery

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Schlossgut Schwante Sculpture Park: ‘We have so much space — soul space’

Loretta Würtenberger and her husband have created a new sculpture park in a grand estate near Berlin, and are opening to visitors next week despite Covid-19

“AEverything is going to be alright” reads the glowing neon text of a work by British artist Martin Creed. It was first created in 1999, but it seems to hold a particular message for the moment. Especially in a new location, gleaming beside a lake in the lush grounds of a brand new initiative, a sculpture park at Schlossgut Schwante in Brandenburg, 25km from Berlin.

The lights are going on, all over Europe — especially in Germany, where most galleries and museums are cautiously reopening after their Covid-induced hibernation. Even so, it seems bold to contemplate a completely new venture just now. But Loretta Würtenberger, who with her husband Daniel Tümpel acquired the grand 18th-century house and estate less than a year ago, seems undaunted. Their opening date, June 19, is going ahead with little delay.

In fact, she tells me, in the Corona-dominated world, “the whole project has taken on a new importance. For me, the works seem to question everything so differently now, take on new meaning. The work by Martin Creed, for example — does it have an exclamation mark or a question mark?”

The 25 pieces of large-scale sculptural work in the opening display, entitled Sculpture and Nature, are set through 10 hectares of parkland around the
house. Some are by big-name artists such as Dan Graham and Tony Cragg; others are fresh commissions for the place, from artists such as Carsten Nicolai and Maria Loboda, and a new neon work by Björn Dahlem, intended to resonate with the surroundings. Some are owned by the couple, who together set up and run Fine Art Partners, a financial services provider specialising in the art market. Others are on loan: “It was wonderful how artists and collectors responded to our plans,” Würtenerberger says. She envisages a two-year rotation of pieces with a continuing programme of commissions, all in consultation with artistic adviser Joost DeClerck.

The speed with which the project has taken shape — just nine months from acquisition of the Schloss to opening — seems astonishing, especially with virus-induced restrictions. As Würtenerberger explains, though, “We didn’t have to make changes to our original plans for the park because everyone involved in it was outdoors all the time. So they could all keep working.

“Even,” she laughs, “even the works coming from London have arrived.”

Loretta Würtenerberger and Daniel Tümpel with Dan Graham’s ‘Play Pen for Play Pals’ (2018) © Leo Pompinon
“We want people to wander, and linger. We’ve put Hängematten — do you call them hammocks in English? — between trees.”

And if the place has a guiding spirit, it’s perhaps that of the French-German artist Hans (Jean) Arp, whose work in the 1920s and ’30s centred around “biomorphic” sculpture, aiming to create parallels and echoes between human creativity and natural creation. Würtenerberger and Tümpel have managed the estate of Arp, and that of his wife Sophie Taeuber-Arp, since 2009; a highly successful lawyer (she was the youngest ever judge at Berlin’s district court), she has applied her skills to advice for others in the sometimes tricky position of managing artists’ estates, in her 2016 book The Artist’s Estate: A Handbook for Artists, Executors, and Heirs. The same year, the couple also founded the Institute for Artists’ Estates, which focuses on managing and consulting, but also acts as a centre for research, resources and networking.
Since Würtenberger is a lawyer, and Tümpel an economist, what sparked their joint immersion in art and the art world? “Art is my passion,” she says, “but my husband was raised with it.” By this she means that Tümpel’s father and mother were both art historians — a Rembrandt scholar and a museum director, respectively — and his grandfather was a student at the Bauhaus. He oversees the family’s Bauhaus archive and collection.

— Schwante, she says, was “to create something close to our hearts”. The huge house, built in 1741 by Frederick the Great’s architect, Georg von Knobelsdorff, was luckily (and unusually) preserved intact as an entity, with its 20 hectares of parkland and its farms, in the days of the DDR. Now the couple live there with their four children: “Half the house is used privately,” Würtenberger explains, “and half is offices, plus salons that are semi-public — they will be a place for private collections, and to show the work of other artists.”

So the sculpture park, ambitious though it is, is not all. “The park is at the heart of something bigger,” she says. “We have so much space — soul space. Artists come here and it’s very calming, everything can be in a new perspective. For visitors too. We want to convey the full spirit of what we create. Even if it’s just getting a wonderful potato salad!

“It’s a place to dream dreams.”

Some of the dreams have had to be put on hold until 2021. Würtenberger and Tümpel have plans for a full-on programme that will include music, movies in the park, dance and photography, a Yoga & Arts Festival, artist-led talks and tours, and much more. Even the cattle on the farm have a place in their art/nature ecosystem. But there are still a number of restrictions in place, and events are not yet possible. There’s a restaurant, of course — “Everyone will need a coffee” — and for the park itself, does she have an idea of the number of visitors they might expect on their opening?

“When we had some open days in May,” she says, “800 people came. It was amazing. So we have no idea. I wish we could predict it. It would be so much easier to calculate how many pieces of cake we have to make.”
It’s only rock ’n’ roll but we like it at the Lisson

LOUISA BUCK
1st November 2018 16:36 GMT

Dan Graham watching Thurston Moore and Debbie Googe perform. Photo: Louisa Buck
Given that the title of Dan Graham’s current Lisson Gallery show (which ends on Saturday 3 November) is Rock ‘n’ Roll, with its underlying theme the relationship between performance and audience, it was only fitting that it be activated by some real-live music. At its Frieze week private view there was a special set by fellow Lisson artist Rodney Graham; on 30 October, the final days of Graham’s tenth show at the gallery were serenaded with a vengeance by a double-whammy of gigs, which took place within the reflective glass curve of Graham’s special new pavilion-cum-stage set.

The artist and his wife Mieko Meguro were in attendance throughout as the evening kicked off with a memorable double guitar performance by Graham’s old friend and now London resident Thurston Moore, formerly of Sonic Youth, who jammed brilliantly for an hour with his frequent collaborator Debbie Googe, bassist for the bands My Bloody Valentine and Primal Scream. This was followed by a second set from seminal British punk trio The Raincoats, who fired up everyone present—from the Serpentine Galleries’ artistic director Hans Ulrich Obrist to the conceptual artist John Hilliard—despite the fact they were winging it without a set list and there was a small hiatus until the bassist and lead vocalist Gina Birch realised that
she had tucked her plectrum inside her sock. Eclectic, original and influential, The Raincoats’ many fans have included the late Kurt Cobain, who famously declared: “When I listen to the Raincoats I feel as if I’m a stowaway in an attic, violating and in the dark.”

On Tuesday night, however, the mood was more celebratory than dark or violating, with Birch rocking a pair of trousers emblazoned with the slogan ‘UNTICK THE WORLD’ and advising the audience that “We are now very mature and only throw tantrums occasionally.” As an encore, Graham requested they perform his favourite Raincoats song “In Love”. With Moore summing up the evening as “insanely awesome”, the art-music love-in was complete.
Dan Graham: Rock 'n' Roll

Rodney Graham: Central Questions of Philosophy

Lisson Gallery, London 3 October 3 November

Dan Graham and Rodney Graham are friends, paired in a double show where Rodney Graham played guitar and sang in Dan Graham’s pavilion. Dan Graham has frequently engaged with performance, and his pavilion will also host a gig by Thurston Moore; but this show’s double focus invites reflections on the Dan/Rodney Graham relation. Dan Graham’s two-way mirror pavilions dispose viewers’ images of themselves amidst others in amusing but often disconcerting ways. It is not just that we see ourselves as others may, but also as other than we have supposed. In his Book of Disquiet, Fernando Pessoa wrote: ‘Each of us is several … a profusion of selves’. Dan Graham’s mirror-windows induce such proliferations, and as much as his pavilions enact what Thierry de Duve called a ‘critique of artistic autonomy’ – they cannot be reduced to minimal objects – they also disturb participants’ confidence in their sense as stable subjects. De Duve was describing Dan Graham’s Performer, Audience, Mirror, which used a feedback loop to loosen his audience’s certainty as to who was producing the affect of their mutual presence in the event. As I observed in my feature ‘Looping The Loop’ (JAM06), it might be in Dan/Rodney Graham’s common use of looping that their affinity originated.

But there are differences. Dan Graham works socially, mediating relations of subject-object and subject-subject among webs of feedback and reflections. Rodney Graham, too, has worked by staging reflexive mediations: yet his subjects have not been social but recondite and romantic: an erant melancholic in ‘Lenz’ was looped into a circular labyrinth of repeating text, and his How I Became a Ramblin’ Man set a wandering cowboy in a video palindrome. Gradually, however, the motifs that Rodney Graham caught within loops, interpolations or cultural clichés shifted from nature – a waterfall in Two Grammators, inverted trees in camera obscura, or textual and musical systems in London’s House, or School of Velocity – towards himself as others, in images of what Pessoa called ‘Heteronyms’ (personae staged amid their worlds, in meticulous detail). Already, he appeared on the cover of his Versandungsmusik CD as if on a 1950s LP of a Viennese modernist composer like Anton Webern. Since then, Rodney Graham has staged himself as, amongst others, a 17th-century sailor, prisoner, bardly ‘gifted amateur’ painter, ‘avid reader’, aukler (after Thomas Eakins), concertinst (after Georges Braque) et al. … Amongst others’ is where Rodney Graham has dispersed – but not disguised – himself. We can’t say ‘disguised’ because, as if among mirrors that never quite displace him, Rodney Graham is always recognisable. This double take has been emphasised by his virtuoso use of high-definition lightbox photos. The photos, like 19th-century ‘problem paintings’, provoke minute scrutiny of details that leave nowhere to hide yet expose Rodney Graham to plain sight. His heteronyms as such present no problems, for their premise is as evidently sham as their ‘gifted amateur’ was ham. Nor is Rodney Graham’s self-involved. These are not Rembrandts costume self-portraits, and not like Cindy Sherman’s studies in identity, Droll and arch, their play is with media images from mid-brow culture, as in the title work here, The Central Questions of Philosophy – adapted from a paperback cover of A.J. Ayer’s popular summary. Four photos show Rodney Graham as Ayer sitting with his dog, as Ayer without dog, the dog, and the empty chair. Shoved behind him are Ayer’s works with others by J.L. Austin. Maybe among these is dispensed an allegory of Ayer’s account of the problem of induction: ‘the problem of finding a way to prove that certain empirical generalisations which derived from experience will hold good also in the future.’ Or maybe not. But to decide that would require a reading of Ayer as close as our gaze into Rodney Graham’s four lightboxes.

Moreover, Rodney Graham’s recent works disperse his subjects even further, by fabricating props from their ostensive worlds. They appeared as actual paintings by Rodney Graham’s active artists, and continue here with Hypocriton, a four-part lightbox, showing a gallerist (based on New York dealer Samuel Kootz) preparing a show of abstract paintings in a style adapted from Alexander Rodchenko. Around this at the Lisson are actual paintings like those in the lightbox. The temporal looping in Rodney Graham’s earlier works has now become a spatial circulation of actual and represented things, reminiscent in form – not content – of Joseph Kosuth’s 1965 One and Three Chairs. Ezra Pound said that ‘Art is news that stays news’; but in times of ‘fake news’, Rodney Graham’s works make faking it into a comedic and elaborate capriccio.

Brian Hatton teaches at the Architectural Association in London and Liverpool John Moores University.
Dan Graham on Rock’n’Roll

As Dan Graham’s new show opens at the Lisson Gallery in London, he talks about his early days as a New York gallerist, his love of music and why he doesn’t believe his famous pavilions are important.

Dan Graham (b1942, Illinois) has had a varied and fascinating career. A self-taught artist, his first real engagement with the world of contemporary art was in 1964, when he and some friends opened the John Daniels Gallery in Manhattan. Here he put on Sol LeWitt’s first one-man show and exhibited works by Donald Judd, Dan Flavin and Robert Smithson. It was common at that time for all artists to consider themselves artist-writers, he says, and he rapidly established a name for himself as a social and cultural analyst, reviewing everything from rock music and TV shows to architecture and urban planning. He has kept up his writing while developing a multimedia practice that includes photography, performance, installation and sculpture.
Over the past three decades, his two-way mirrored or half-mirrored glass and steel pavilions — often described as halfway between architecture and sculpture — have become familiar sights on the rooftops and in the landscapes of leading cultural institutions, including the Dia Art Foundation in New York, Documenta, the Hayward Gallery in London and Hauser & Wirth Somerset. Combining the glassy perfection of corporate atria (another topic Graham has written about) with the inviting curves and tactility of children’s play equipment, and the optical illusions of fairground mirrors, he has described his more recent pavilion series — including Child’s Play (2015-16) for the Museum of Modern Art’s Sculpture Garden — as “fun houses for children and photo ops for parents”.


Graham, who is based in New York, talked with Studio International in London as his 10th exhibition for the Lisson Gallery opened. For this show, he presents a new curvilinear stage-set along with oversized models that demonstrate his work within both urban and natural landscapes, and a courtyard pavilion, all of which are designed to interrogate the relationship between audience and performer. He is also showing a video of a puppet show he devised 12 years ago, called Don’t Trust Anyone Over 30. He devised the piece, which is set in the 1970s, as a conversation starter for grandparents to reminisce with their offspring over the hippy heyday in the 1960s. It was produced by Sandra Antelo-Suarez, with set design by Laurent Bergen, music by Japancher and the theme tune was by Rodney Graham. The puppet master was Phillip Huber.


**Dan Graham: Rock’n’Roll**  
Lisson Gallery, London  
3 October – 3 November 2018

Interview by VERONICA SIMPSON  
Filmed by MARTIN KENNEDY
Dan Graham: Rock ‘n’ Roll

For his tenth exhibition with Lisson Gallery, Dan Graham draws on his long-standing history working with music and performance to present a new stage-set design, alongside over-sized models, video and a courtyard pavilion, exploring the relationship between audience and performer.

Based in New York, Graham is an icon of Conceptual art, emerging in the 1960s alongside artists such as Dan Flavin, Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt. A hybrid artist, he has been at the forefront of many of the most significant artistic developments of the last half-century, including site-specific sculpture, video and film installation, conceptual and performance art, as well as social and cultural analysis through his extensive writings. Delving into the performative in the early 1970s – exploring shifts in individual and group consciousness, and the limits of public and private space – Graham’s practice evolved into the installations and pavilions for which he is famous internationally. Today, his work continues to evolve with the world around it, taking on a different reading in the age of social media, photography and obsessive self-documentation. A recent work such as Child’s Play (2015-2016), which was on display recently in Museum of Modern Art’s Sculpture Garden, is from a group of works that Graham describes as fun houses for children and photo ops for parents.
The artist's latest presentation of work focuses on the relationship between musical performance and audience. The space at 27 Bell Street will be occupied by a curvilinear stage-set which visitors will be able to walk around. Blurring the line between art and architecture, Graham's pavilions – or 'quasi-functional spaces' as he describes them – are optical illusions, mirroring and distorting reality. Simultaneously evoking corporate architecture and playgrounds, these spaces are activated by the presence of the viewer who becomes both performer and spectator, creating a voyeuristic space for watching one-self and others. Playing in the stage is the recording of his 1983 installation/ performance work with composer Glenn Branca, presented at Graham's retrospective exhibition 'Pavilions' at the Kunsthalle in Berne, Switzerland. **Musical Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Time-Delay** involves both the performers and the audience members' self-awareness of their perception process.
The film work, Don’t Trust Anyone Over 30, will be presented downstairs in the gallery. The piece was originally presented as a live rock ‘n’ roll puppet show, written by Dan Graham. Set in the 1970s when hippies moved to the country, it was first conceived by Graham as a conduit for grandparents or older parents to share memories of the 1960s hippie era with their offspring. The piece was produced by Sandra Antelo-Suarez in collaboration with puppet master Phillip Huber, with set design by Laurent Bergen, video projections by Tony Oursler, music by Japantor and the theme tune composed by Rodney Graham.

Throughout the gallery space a new group of models will be displayed, underlining Graham’s work within the urban and natural landscape, culminating also with the presence of a new pavilion in the courtyard and documentation of his work in varied locations.

Graham’s exhibition at Lisson Gallery will be activated through musical performances on the evening of 30 October, hosting special guests Thurston Moore, of Sonic Youth, and The Raincoats.

Alongside the exhibition, Graham’s London Rococo is on view in Regents Park as part of Frieze Sculpture 2018.

Dan Graham: Rock ‘n’ Roll 3 October – 3 November 2018
LISSON GALLERY

Interview Magazine
December/January 2018
Dan
GRAHAM

No other American artist has deconstructed and reconstructed the many frames of perception quite as radically as the legendary New York multimedia maestro, pop-culture enthusiast, and all-around mad genius. 

By Michael Smith Photography Sebastian Kim
Since the late 1990s, the artist Dan Graham has worked out of his loft in Nohna, a New York neighborhood that has undergone extensive gentrification over the last two decades. On a recent visit, I spotted a pop-up skate-boards-and-backpack store teeming with young shoppers a few steps from Graham's door. Maybe Graham likes it this way, as he's written so much on rock music and youth culture, and has designed public structures for children. You never know what his favorite music is going to kick off on next. Whether it's a spontaneous evocation of David Koresh and Waco during a quiet walk through Donald Judd's Marfa compound, bringing up an asshole at the most inappropriate moment, or his amazing, almost encyclopedic recit of information that would give most writers a run for their money, Graham, now 57, never ceases to surprise.

He's deeply into astrology. Anyone who knows him almost always enters into his contribution of astrological annotations. He's an Aries, indicating spontaneity, and he's also into cliques, architecture, music, art, puppets, and TV comedy. He's known Graham since the mid-90s, when the art world was a much smaller place. Today, of course, most people know Graham as an icon, the quintessential hybrid artist whose practice has encompassed a range of media, disciplines, and contexts, including video art (of which he was an early pioneer), architecture, performance, photography, literature, and most notably, a series of steel-and-glass pavilions. This past summer, one such pavilion, CGI Play (2015-16), went on display in the sculpture garden at New York's Museum of Modern Art. In spite of all that, Graham occasionally misses his work will be forgotten and that no one wants his archive.

His anxiety is understandable. The past couple of years have been intense ones for a man with too much spirit. A suicide on a site in a visit Philadelphia in the hospital for months, and it was too much—no, it was too much; and thinking about the possible uses of television, a favorite subject of his, for a series of future works.


DAN GRAHAM: I remember being fascinated by this cartoon show on TV with Uncle Fred. I was utterly fascinated by how TV was produced. Uncle Fred not only showed cartoons, he was also a ventriloquist. I saw that the puppet could be worked mechanically. Later, there was Flooby Doodly with a square arm from a gallery. I liked how these shows included the spectator—in other words, the studio audience—and how that interaction became part of how the whole thing worked.

SMITH: We had Flooby Doodly growing up in Chicago, but not Uncle Fred.

GRAHAM: It was on a local station in Newark, I guess, that I'd have to understand the medium of television much better after watching Uncle Fred—for my career. By the way, what I really love is Canadian humor.

SMITH: Didn't you go on a family trip to Canada when you were a kid?

GRAHAM: Yes. Nova Scotia was unbelievably good. It's a little bit like Scotland. They had little pigs there. But that family trip was a little nauseating. I was thrown out of the car for arguing with my father.

SMITH: Thrown out of the car?

GRAHAM: I think my father gave me an ultimatum. So, actually, I got out of the car. I had a very troubled childhood.

SMITH: Until what age?

GRAHAM: Until I decided I would stay with a friend in the East Village in New York.

SMITH: How old were you then?

GRAHAM: Around 13 years old. But I was never on the streets. I never smoked dope. In fact, my first impressions of New York City were of when my mother took me to Gimbel's to buy stamps.

SMITH: Assume you finished high school in Jersey? GRAHAM: Honestly, I wanted to drop out. I was bad in all my classes—actually, I did very well in English.

SMITH: I would imagine, because you're a great writer.

GRAHAM: Thank you. I had a very good English teacher in school named Mr. Donnelly. He was a kind of freethinking semi-intellectual. He allowed all the kids to make out in his classes.

SMITH: Excuse me?

GRAHAM: It was called "pecking" back then. I never learned what that word meant from the Beach Boys album Pet Sounds.

SMITH: Did you finish high school?

GRAHAM: Yes, I never actually dropped out. I'm fuzzy about that time, though, because I almost had a schizophrenic breakdown, and they decided to give me Thorazine. I stopped taking it because it was making me feel too weird.

SMITH: That's interesting about the loss of vision.

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"WHEN I PITCH MY WORK, I SAY, ‘THese ARE FUN HOUSES FOR CHILDREN AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS.’"
13 years old. I was very shy around girls. Normally, my father and I didn't go along, but he helped me assemble a telescope from a kit. I showed all the boys and girls the planets. I kind of learned about the planets.

SMITH: Perhaps that was your introduction to astronomy.

GRAHAM: Well, I did take some students to the Princeton observatory. That was the beginning of my teaching experience. Men always use optics. It probably goes back to when I had a magnifying glass and killed ants. Aunt reminded me very much of Marthas.

SMITH: Science seems to have figured prominently in your life.

GRAHAM: I guess because it was aimed at my age group, which was 12- and 13-year-olds, and to kids who think they know a lot about science. My hero was Einstein. But then I discovered [the German physicist Werner] Heisenberg, who I thought was better than Einstein. There was also a magazine called Amusing Science Fiction. The editor was named John Campbell. A friend and I visited him in Montclair, New Jersey, near the cutting-edge technology institute Bell Labs.

SMITH: Didn't Bell Labs do E.A.T.? [Beginning in the 50s, Bell Labs researchers collaborated with artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and John Cage on tech-centered art projects under the auspices of Experiments in Art and Technology.]

GRAHAM: Yeah, Bell Labs came out of telephones and went into a lot of other things. Anyway, for us to meet an editor of a great science fiction magazine was thrilling. But he lived in a drug-suburban home and was winning all the time. I guess he had asthma. I realized then that maybe science fiction writers were actually kind of semi-creeps. Later, when I was interested in art, all the artists I knew would go to paperback stores and read a lot of science, particularly the so-called minimal artists. Carl Andre subscribed to Scientific American as did Lee Lozano. I think a group of British science fiction writers, like Brian Aldiss and Michael Moorcock, were doing a lot of LSD, and they had a lot of time parades. A piece of mine, "Per Picture Side Alison" [1972], owed a lot to Cyprian's [by Brian Aldiss, about time going backward].

SMITH: There were two performers in "Per Picture Side Alison," one predicting the other's movements in a continuous feedback/feed-ahead loop. I always liked the pieces where you appeared as a performer. I'm thinking, in particular, of Performed/Disguise/Mirror [a 1975 video-documentation work in which Graham performs for an audience in front of a mirror].

GRAHAM: I didn't want to see myself as a performer. I was interested in the space.

SMITH: Well, what about the piece where you're asked with a woman in a cylinder, both of you holding cameras?

GRAHAM: Oh, that was a publicity shot. I refused to be in the actual film [Bob Peake, 1970-72], two films projected on opposite walls.

SMITH: You got asked for the publicity shot? Who was in the film?

GRAHAM: The male in that film was a boyfriend of Berenette Mayer. Vito Acconci's collaborator. I was director. The photo was picked up later by the internet. Now, you mentioned Performed/Disguise/Mirror. That was originally a slight attack on Joseph Beuys, who was a guru performer.

SMITH: An attack on Beuys?

GRAHAM: He was doing performance in New York. I guess the community was suspicions of him. He was German, he was political—maybe it had something to do with Nazism. In Performed/Disguise/Mirror, I was like a political figure, as Beuys was. When you define the audience, the performer becomes what the audience wants. Politicians do that all the time.

SMITH: My fantasy is to redo that piece with you, somehow.

GRAHAM: What I like about the piece is that feeling of the audience. But neither of us are amateurs anymore. I'm thinking about Acconci's whole practice in relationship to yours. He talked about translating from writing to performing, moving from the space of the page to the space of performance. I am curious if this is also true in your work.

GRAHAM: Vito used to call me up and say, "Dan, I have no ideas. Give me some ideas."

SMITH: And did you?

GRAHAM: To a certain extent. But when he got into architecture, he didn't know what the hell he was talking about. See, my understanding of architecture is when you actually go inside and experience it. SMITH: He was a great performer.

GRAHAM: Seated is quite good. I think he was a man of theater.

SMITH: Can we talk about TV and sitcoms now?

GRAHAM: I didn't see many sitcoms. I remember Robert Cummings [star of the The Bob Cummings Show, among other sitcoms]. He was a very '50s white guy who was always making mistakes. He was very much like this music group, the Four Freshmen,
who influenced the Beach Boys.

SMITH: The Beach Boys represented everything I knew I'd never have. The world that Brian Wilson constructed intimidated me.

GRAHAM: When I was compiling Don Graham's Greatest Hits (Graham) mixtape series, which has now run to six volumes, I remembered "Add Some Music to Your Day" by the Beach Boys, which almost sounds like a commercial. It's absolutely brilliant. The form comes very close to a simple advertising slogan. Brian Wilson was incredibly original, but he also stole a lot from Jan and Dean. What interests us, as Jewish folklorists, is the kind of white Protestant church music you can hear in the back of the trinity. Many people come out West to California from the Northeast and get very into Protestant hymns. That is the voice of Karen Carpenter—totally white, with a strange kind of spirituality that is usually hard to understand. Also, until recently, all the Beach Boys songs are about how you can get married and be happy—a kind of '50s dream. The group was as close to, because I was a New Yorker, as the Four Seasons. SMITH: I want to leave the Garden State and ask you about New York City. Could you talk about your gallery, John Daniels, which was on 66th Street? You were really young when it opened in 1964. It seemed very ambitious.

GRAHAM: That's a bit of a myth. I saw what they call a succession. I had no job, and I had two friends who wanted to social climb because they were reading Esquire magazine, and a gallery looked like a cool place to social climb. They put in some money and my parents put in some money as a tax loss. I knew nothing about art.

SMITH: And the artists you brought in just thought, "Okay, well... why not?"

GRAHAM: No. The first show I did was a Christmas show where anybody who came in could exhibit.

SMITH: An open call?

GRAHAM: I don't think I advertised. The artist I booked most closely was Sol LeWitt. I wanted desperately to have a gallery because I was not in the Greens Gallery, where all his friends were. The reason I liked Sol LeWitt is that we had the same favorite writer, Michel de Heilbrunn. We all read French novels and watching Godard films. People who came to the gallery were young artists who wanted to make it. So they would find my gallery could they could want to show them. SMITH: Were you showing incredibly cutting-edge artists, but you made it sound like another telescope club.

GRAHAM: Well, I didn't even know what was going on. All I know is that we all wanted to be writers. Other shows there were group shows. One was called "Plastics." We had a Judd plastic piece and a Robert Smithson. SMITH: It's funny how these artists were gravitating to you.

GRAHAM: I think artists were looking for galleries.

SMITH: It's a different today.

GRAHAM: The personalities were very different. There was even a period a bit later where artists wanted to destroy value.

SMITH: Speaking of value, how was business?

GRAHAM: We hardly ever added any work. We went out of business at the end of the season. Afterward, I did small jobs. I was very good at lighting.

SMITH: You were so electronica?

GRAHAM: No, the lighting was for installations for art shows. That's part of doing a show. I was also briefly knocking down walls in Roy Lichtenstein's studio.

SMITH: Are you speaking metaphorically?

GRAHAM: No, that's all I did. I wasn't very good at it. Lichtenstein impressed me enormously. He was a workaholic, and I could detect he was interested in a kind of Jewish sense of irony.

SMITH: I imagine his use of clichés also made an impression. Pop artists really put clichés in people's faces. Allan Kaprow wrote about America's attraction to melodrama.

GRAHAM: About four years ago I saw a show of artists in New Jersey at Princeton University. I realized Kaprow was, like me, also taking photographs on highways, at that show, there were some big surprises. There could be a great little documentary on how all of those artists were teaching at terrible schools, then went to Rutgers and discovered each other.

SMITH: Speaking of clichés, what's the deal with astrology?

GRAHAM: I think astrology was important to me when I was teaching. It allows you to create a bond with students very quickly. What's CONTINUED ON PAGE 12?

MICHAEL SMITH IS A BROOKLYN-BASED ARTIST RECENTLY PARTICIPATED IN A INSTALLATION PROJECT AT LICHTENSTEIN'S NEW YORK APARTMENT. PHOTOGRAPHY: ROY LICHTENSTEIN
Glass act: Dan Graham's latest installation offers a new perspective on Marseille

Dan Graham's latest exhibition, 'Observatory/Playground', is the final instalment in a trilogy of shows curated by French designer Ora-Ito atop Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse in Marseille.
Graham's almost phantom pavilions survive Le Corbusier as they blend in with the mod concrete curves and pillars. Photography: Sébastien Veronese

The structures teleport the surrounding cityscape sprawling out to sea and mountains directly to the rooftop in faint hologram-like images reflected in the pavilions' undulating glass. Photography: Sébastien Veronese
The private rooftop wading pool on one side of the MAMO makes the Cité Radieuse a literal playground for inhabitants.

Graham’s pavilions expand the play area for resident children, as well as their perspective on the city. Photography: Sébastien Veronese.
American artist Dan Graham's favourite Jean-Luc Godard film _Two or Three Things I Know About Her_ is set in an ancient city dotted with high-rise buildings. So there's no venue more fitting than the Marseille Modulor (MAMO) to unveil his latest pavilion installation. In the exhibition 'Observatory/Playground' atop Le Corbusier's towering residential Cité Radieuse, Graham adds a thoughtful, reflective touch to the roof.

French designer and MAMO curator Ora-Ito says Graham's exhibition is the final instalment in the trilogy of his 'first vision' for the space, which launched in 2013 with Xavier Veilhan's homage to Le Corbusier. Daniel Buren took over the rooftop last year with his black-and-white stripes in what Ora-Ito says was an 'emancipation' from the imposing austerity of the building's modern architecture.

When he decided to make the rooftop a public gallery rather than pursuing his original plans of a private penthouse, Ora-Ito said he had to show artists with a strong vision or risk MAMO falling flat. 'It's like putting someone in the arena with lions,' he said. 'They would just get eaten by Le Corbusier. You cannot escape Le Corbusier.'

Graham's almost phantom pavilions survive Le Corbusier as they blend in with the mod concrete curves and pillars. The structures teleport the surrounding cityscape sprawling out to sea and mountains directly to the rooftop in faint hologram-like images reflected in the pavilions' undulating glass.

Graham said he was not a Le Corbusier fan at first, but grew to like his work. He can rattle off astrological signs of actors, artists and architects and said that Le Corbusier's Libra tendency to balance male and female aspects comes through in his designs.

One pavilion is an existing structure originally submitted to and rejected by the Bronx Botanical Gardens. Graham chose the other piece in the exhibition to evoke waves. Seven models of his other designs - including his well-known 'Skateboard Pavilion' (1989) - and two films accompany the two full-size structures.
Even though Graham has been making his glass and steel pavilion series since the 1980s, well before today’s social media explosion, the reflective walk-in sculptures seem made for the modern vanity of the selfie. Despite the funhouse mirror images begging for a quick snap, the pieces respectfully demand the viewer to observe the scene morphing before them even if only to slow down so as not to walk into the wall.

The private rooftop wading pool on one side of the MAMO makes the Cité Radieuse a literal playground for inhabitants. Graham’s pavilions expand that play area for resident children, as well as their perspective on the city.

In October the wave pavilion will be installed at Place Vendôme in Paris during FIAC, which is a much safer choice than last year’s controversial inflatable tree sculpture that provoked a physical assault on artist Paul McCarthy and an early dismantling of the piece.

With Graham’s exhibition closing MAMO’s first cycle in September, Ora-Îto promised surprises to come with a teasing mention of opening a new part of the Cité Radieuse as part of plans to expand the gallery.
Hedge Two-Way Mirror Walkabout, Metropolitan Museum, New York – review

By Ariella Budick

A seriously charming and richly allusive installation has appeared on the roof of the Met

The Metropolitan Museum’s remote rooftop garden has always offered savvy visitors respite from hall after hall of sublime majesty. Right now, it opens on to an artificial-grass oasis that hovers like a magic carpet above the edge of Central Park. Lawn chairs are temptingly scattered about. The view beckons. And off to one side, a mirrored pavilion perches on its glowing patch of green, catching the kaleidoscopic tumult of the city and playfully casting it back.

Dan Graham collaborated with landscape architect Günther Vogt to transform the Met’s severe space into “Hedge Two-Way Mirror Walkabout”, a seriously charming funhouse. It’s a mind-bending piece of walk-in sculpture, a two-chambered bubble of mirrored glass and steel that invites viewers to glimpse themselves in its reflective surfaces. However we look at it, we see ourselves askew – here, sleekly thin; there, grotesquely fat, mixed up with the people on the other side of the transparent wall and a flickering melange of sky, leaves, buildings and passing clouds.
Graham’s rooftop pavilion teems with allusions. It invokes, first of all, the extravagantly ornamental structures – faux Greek temples, mock gothic ruins – designed as picturesque points of interest in 18th-century English gardens. At Stowe, Lord Cobham hid a “Temple of Ancient Virtue” among the vegetation, honouring the greatest Greeks and expressing his yearning for Hellenic antiquity. Graham has fallen under a more modern version of the neoclassical spell: he finds inspiration in the stripped-down austerity of Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion, which he admires both because it was always meant to be temporary, and because it effectively blends vegetation and reflective glass.

Graham has merged that picturesque fantasy with the midtown skyline. His twisty mirror reflects the gleaming necklace of skyscrapers around Central Park, many of them glass boxes in the spirit of Mies. Those ever-taller towers project an air of elegant efficiency while offering excellent camouflage: the reflective façades of high-rise headquarters and plutocrats’ pads provide their occupants with limitless views yet shield them from observation. “Surveillance power is given to the corporate tower,” as Graham notes in the catalogue. At the Met, he has created a miniature office building with a diabolical twist. The architecture of corporate modernism was developed to maximise productivity and embody egalitarian transparency, but Graham’s glass geometries are deliberately labyrinthine and confusing, an exercise in rationality gone nuts.

If his shiny glass-and-steel structure echoes midtown Manhattan’s extravagantly vertical skyline, the emerald plot miniaturises the awesome expanse of the Great Lawn, which unfolds just below the roof’s parapet. Graham plays off the idea of Central Park as New York’s backyard, installing a high box hedge like those that marked off the subdivisions of his youth.
Graham grew up across the Hudson River in New Jersey and he describes the suburbs as “an ambivalent arcadia”. One of his most famous pieces is the 1967 “Homes for America”, a grid-like photo essay on the prefab insta-towns that mushroomed along the peripheries of American cities. The houses look like serialised containers by Donald Judd, though Graham christened them with such allusive names as “The Sonata”, “The Serenade” and “The Nocturne”. In the generic repetitiveness of suburban homes, he found the democratic promise of social mobility. He recognises, though, that the orderly chequerboards of houses and lawns can feel confining, even prison-like. The Met’s rooftop hedge is an equivocal symbol. “Good fences make good neighbours,” Robert Frost wrote, with more than a pinch of irony. Here, Graham elaborates a similar idea, marking off boundaries between properties that nobody owns.

His charming burst of greenery belongs to a long tradition of picturesque illusion, intertwining artifice and nature. The landscape designers of the 18th century groomed hillsides to look like paintings. In the 19th century, Frederick Law Olmsted sculpted Central Park with that romantic example in mind. In the 20th, Kevin Roche, the architect who for decades supervised the Met’s expansions and renovations, also designed the Ford Foundation Building, where great pillars enclose a verdant paradise. And in the 21st, this Day-Glo clearing appears atop a museum that is both a corporate intrusion into the urban wilderness and another kind of indoor Eden.

Graham has summed up this lineage by drawing an explicit analogy between the urban museum and the bucolic estate: “Contemporary art museums function as locations for romantic rendezvous, just as 18th-century landscape gardens encouraged purposeful strolling, punctuated by pauses at pavilions and arbours.” The Latin phrase for the country in the city is _rus in urbe_, and “Hedge Two-Way Mirror Walkabout” is a fresh iteration of that old idea, spiced with subtle trickery. A parody office sits on a synthetic lawn at the edge of a man-made wilderness in the centre of a great metropolis. No wonder the reflections in its mirrors look so strange.
SOCIAL SPACES

Dan Graham discusses sci-fi, dance, model-making and the ‘just-past’ with Turkish artist Can Altay
CA My first real appreciation of your work was in Berlin several years ago, when I saw Across Ethnographic Patterns (1998) in the Spree river.

DAN GRAHAM First thing I noticed is that there's a reflection of the sculpture in the window. The sculpture is being reflected in the water. The water is so clear, you can see the sculpture in the window.

CA What I meant to say was that the reflections of the sculptures in the water was what I thought was so striking. It was like a new kind of sculpture.

DAN GRAHAM It's like a new kind of sculpture.

CA I saw it as a kind of 'sculpting in water', rather than 'sculpting in stone'.

DAN GRAHAM I think it's about human scale, too. While I was living in Berlin, I came across Minimal art, and I think it's important. It's about the human scale of it.

CA I also like the way you use mirrors and light in your work.

DAN GRAHAM I think mirrors and light are important in sculpture.

CA Early on, my gallery John Daniel GALLERIES, New York, which Graham opened in 1979, showed artists like Pat Petruchio, Dan Flavin, and I think that's important. Artists like these are important for me.

DAN GRAHAM I think it's important for artists to show their work to other artists.

CA I also like the way you use mirrors and light in your work.

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DAN GRAHAM I think mirrors and light are important in sculpture.
I was interested in the sun setting, the clouds changing, as people moved their bodies in time.

Dan Graham

CA. That sounds very much like the inner-dialogue you were crouching in the early video works.

CA. Walter Benjamin's idea of the "just-pass" has been important to me. In other words, you don't have just the present time or even 1960s, but an entangled present tense that is a continuation of the "just-pass".

CA. In 2003, I had a piece at Platform Ceramics in Istanbul that was very much related to that idea. Over the course of several exhibitions, I reconfigured and reconfigured all the exhibited works in the gallery. So the new space would open for the installation and then the whole space was reconfigured, growing and changing. I was working with extracted samples from the works by artists who showed in the title of the piece, along with a documentation of the rooms in which the artists themselves installed them. But it was also slowly becoming something else, both the exhibition and the exhibition were being reconfigured.

CA. A piece that I might not know I did exist in an alternative space called the Franklin Furnace in SoHo. In the spring, I presented slides of the entire exhibition space taken from the front window view of every gallery exhibition concurrent with my show (1979). At the time, I was very inspired by drug-influenced science-fiction writers such as Brian Aldiss, as well as by Gregory Benford's writing, especially his "quintessential" theory of schizophrenia. Barson was married to Margaret Leon, whose books on mind and society in primitive cultures I read when I was only 13, which probably became my feminism. All of my uncollected early video pieces were about learning processes and public access, without much. But I have no critique about my work. It's very much experimental. And I'm a feminist, so I'm a little embarrassed about that.

CA. Another disadvantage of video-project installations is that they somehow reach the viewer that they are part of a group. The audience always forms a group, a contingent community.

CG. In the early 1960s, a great influence on me was Alvin Halliday's dance group in San Francisco, which was something like a psychologically therapeutic body workshop. The participants included Richard, Simone Forti, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman and Vito Acconci. The Halliday group was interested in the physical aspects of body movement, also in the dancers' interactions in communal, social situations. Her workshop came out of a kind of early hippie communal, psychological body-art influence coming from New York through the transplanted San Francisco, Richard and Richard Serra, both of whom I met while they lived in the early '70s. When I first met Richard, he told me that Alvin's work was a big influence on his sculpture, especially his use of gravity in human movement.

CA. I'm interested in how function and culture overlap with meaning. I deal with this question a lot in my work, increasingly so in projects such as the "behavioral" piece, A Possible, stated, which involved initiating the movement of objects -- including a Norman and Grace O'Keeffe -- alongside collectively produced elements in a park in Istanbul. Similarly, my 2011 exhibition at Casco in Utrecht was an investigation in the public's multiple perceptions and the result of a project for which I was asked to make a video and a public sculpture, to be used to show how functional or slightly dysfunctional programming and settings, to be put together in an outdoor setting.

CG. When I had the gallery, my first artist was LA Van and my last was Finlay. They both worked in the group in the Great Exhibition. Russian Art, 1962-1992, that Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1962, and my work really comes out of the kind of quasi-functionality, quasi-design of Constructivism, but I also like things that are not one thing or the other. Hybridity is a very important feature in my most recent works, which function as a bridge between art and architecture.
Nicholas Logsdail, my Lisson dealer, suggested I should make models of my pavilions which could function as scaleable sculptures. I did this, but in fact my work is not exactly sculpture; the models don't really replicate the situation of my work. My work is very site-specific—it's about light conditions, galleries can't emote outdoor light. So to change that impression I put a lot of effort into videotaping and editing these videos, because it's the only way of filming the work in terms of its actual situation. People often misunderstand my work. For example, Houses for America (1996–7) is not a sociological critique of suburban culture, but a celebration of lower-middle-class suburban culture. In a way, I was making lists of standard sociological pieces in magazines like Esquire, which focus on the alienation of suburbia and are illustrated by a serious 'name' photographer. Houses for America is also about the suburban city plan as a basis for structuring art.

Barrie Wentzell, curator of 'A Survey of Sculpture 1994–2004' at the Hayward Gallery, London, has talked about a new style of sculpture, which is maybe more masculine. This sculpture, I think, is something to do with the whole question of gender in art. Nicholas Logsdail, my Lisson dealer, suggested I should make models of my pavilions which could function as scaleable sculptures. I did this, but in fact my work is not exactly sculpture; the models don't really replicate the situation of my work. My work is very site-specific—it's about light conditions, galleries can't emote outdoor light. So to change that impression I put a lot of effort into videotaping and editing these videos, because it's the only way of filming the work in terms of its actual situation. People often misunderstand my work. For example, Houses for America (1996–7) is not a sociological critique of suburban culture, but a celebration of lower-middle-class suburban culture. In a way, I was making lists of standard sociological pieces in magazines like Esquire, which focus on the alienation of suburbia and are illustrated by a serious 'name' photographer. Houses for America is also about the suburban city plan as a basis for structuring art.

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Architecture is completely compliant, especially in the ways in which it works with and for “Power”.

Can Altay

14 It was interesting to hear how you talk about the commissioning processes, the way you work in response to a site or client.
15 What I like about being almost an architect, is that whatever comes into the so-called office, you respond to — whether it’s corporate or non-corporate or whatever it is.
16 There is always this sense of negotiation — you have to deal with the residents.
17 Well, that’s architecture.
18 In my opinion, architecture is completely compliant, especially in the ways in which it works with and for “power”: that, hopefully, works of architecture also generate room for presence, or at least allow something outside the utility and profit logic that govern sites and buildings in general.
19 You have to deal with people’s bodies, I’ve written about Peter Zumthor’s thermal baths in Vals [1996]. The great thing about that project is that it’s a 1960s hospital that was going out of business. To save the building, Zumthor put a kind of 60s structure with a Roman-period thermal bath on top of it. There, the feeling in his design work is very important.
20 The other person who uses body as a context is John Chamberlain.

For his Guggenheim show in New York, in a Frank Lloyd Wright building whose galleries are like a large topological Möbius strip, he put in raw foam rubber couches in the centre of the lobby. They were for people to relax in while other visitors gazed from the gallery levels — an observation of their subjective pleasure, like a drug experience.

Chamberlain is one of the most brilliant artists that I know; he did so many different kinds of things and he would still go on to do something else. At least 8 percent of my works are failures. Most artists who are successful have perfected a fairly slick signature style. I like artists who experiment and don’t mind failure.

Can Altay is an artist based in Istanbul, Turkey. Recent exhibitions include “The Church Street Partners’ Quasar” at The Showroom, London, UK (2010), and “COMART: An Assembly of Spare Parts” at Casco, Utrecht, the Netherlands (2014). Forthcoming projects include Unicef Projects East, London, launching this summer.

Dan Graham lives and works in New York, USA, and has written two articles on The Kirby. In 1965, he opened the John Daniels Gallery in New York, USA, where he put on Sol LeWitt’s first solo show. He has exhibited and realised commissions all around the world, including at the Venice Biennale (1976, 2003, 2004 and 2015) and documenta V, VI, VII, IX, and X (1972, 1977, 1982, 1992 and 2007). Major retrospectives of his work have been staged in Europe (1993–94) and in the US (2002). Recent solo exhibitions include Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK; Protocinema, Istanbul, Turkey (both 2017); and Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland (2019). He currently has an exhibition at Lisson Gallery, London, UK.

An earlier version of this conversation appeared in issue 126 of the Turkish art journal Sisat Uluyarmaz.