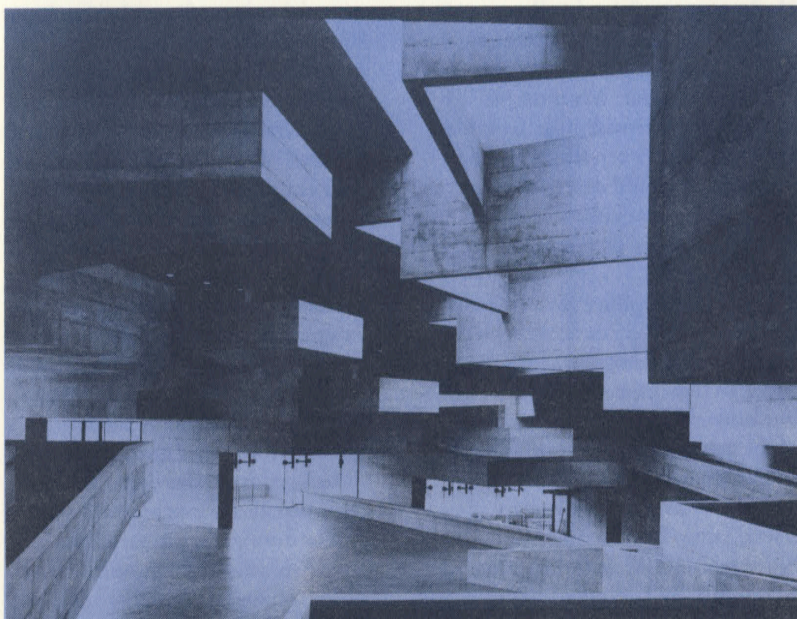


Linda Roush-Hudson  
MATRIX/BERKELEY 157

University Art Museum/  
Pacific Film Archive  
late March - late June 1993

*Light Foil, 1993*





Linda Roush-Hudson's MATRIX exhibition consists of a new installation, *Light Foil*, created especially for the museum's dramatic central atrium. This vast and challenging space has been utilized for installations a number of times in the past, including works by Daniel Buren, Robert Irwin, Carl Andre, James Lee Byars, and Matt Heckert. In a preliminary statement defining her goals for this project, Roush-Hudson wrote, "...artists [have often] used the space as a place to hold their work, define it, monumentalize it. My work is more concerned with what feels like a confusion between the work and the space. I would describe it as a 'foil,' a thing that enhances or sets off another thing by contrast."<sup>1</sup>

*Light Foil* exemplifies Roush-Hudson's ongoing concern with the subtle interplay between space and light. In this respect, Roush-Hudson is drawing from the legacy of the Southern California Light and Space movement, which included artists such as Robert Irwin, James Turrell, and Maria Nordman. Whereas these artists were typically concerned with creating abstract evocations of perceptual plenitude, Roush-Hudson's work takes a step back from such transcendent effects. Perhaps with a recognition of the inevitable commingling of sacred and profane experience, Roush-Hudson teases a sensual aesthetic out of ordinary materials sensitively arranged so as to bring out their own, and the gallery's, unexpected beauty.

Roush-Hudson is a minimalist in the sense that she tends to add to a given space the least possible amount of material to achieve the desired effect. Her "work" in this

instance consists of innumerable blue glass marbles placed in each of the small indentations that demarcate the structural pattern of the building in its atrium area, an ethereal wire and transparent plexiglass screen hanging between the lobby and the gallery, a grid of blue-mirrored plexiglass circles applied to the gallery windows, and hanging cords and plexiglass that join the atrium's floor to the balconies at three of the building's essential points of structural support. The artist frequently cultivates an effect which the art critic David Pagel has identified as emphasizing the viewer's peripheral vision: "...her out-of-focus yet deliberate arrangement refuses the notion of dominance altogether, instead creating an environment whose powerfully tranquil effect seems to be defined by everything except that which one is currently examining."<sup>2</sup>

Among the qualities of the museum building to which *Light Foil* is directly addressed are its approximation of a theatrical space and its dominating spiral form. Roush-Hudson alludes to elements of theater especially in the large hanging screen, which suggests either a scrim or a backdrop, depending on whether it is viewed from the lobby or the upper balconies. Leaving the floor of the gallery uncluttered with objects, Roush-Hudson opens the gallery to the entrance and participation of spectator/actors, who become primary physical elements when the work is viewed from afar.

Reading the museum's spiral design as signifying a particular ideology of history, that is, an Hegelian notion of dialectical progress, Roush-Hudson has sought to "bracket" this conception by

creating a powerful alternative experience emphasizing stasis and dispersion. "Mario Ciampi, the museum's architect," recalled Roush-Hudson in a recent interview, "mentioned that in the museum you always see back to where you've just been. I think that's profoundly true. That pinpoints exactly what I've been trying to do. For me, it's about turning back and looking at the building and having it become a profound object."<sup>3</sup>

Concerning her characteristic use of the color blue, Roush-Hudson has said, "Blue always means a kind of vastness or infinity, and for me it also has a relationship to sky and space and to an idea about where light comes from. In Goethe's theory of colors, blue was the first color away from darkness. When light was allowed into darkness the first color you had was blue. I thought that was very beautiful. I also see blue as instability. It's always deferring to something. My pieces all are so interconnected in the way they're structured and the way they fit within the space, that it feels that there's a glancing off from one thing to another. I see it as becoming a kind of transparent skin that encompasses the space."<sup>4</sup>

Roush-Hudson has spoken of "feminizing" the rather brutal, concrete forms of the museum's architecture. Her solution to this problem consists less in introducing conventionally "feminine" forms, materials, or colors, than in simply cultivating in the viewer a different kind of attention to the space itself. Rather than seeing the museum as a humbling pedestal for great works, Roush-Hudson suggests "a filled emptiness...a kind of female dispersion" in which the viewers as well as the art works coexist in a

state of quiet reverie.<sup>5</sup>

Linda Roush-Hudson received an M.F.A. from the Art Center School of Design, Pasadena, in 1989. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

Lawrence Rinder

1. Roush-Hudson, unpublished artist's statement, 1992.
2. *Arts Magazine*, March 1991, p. 86.
3. Roush-Hudson, interview with the author, 17 February 1993.
4. *Ibid.*
5. See note 1 above.

Work in MATRIX:

*Light Foil*, 1993, multi-media installation.

Selected one-person exhibitions:

Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA, *Light Joining* '90; S. Bitter-Larkin Gallery, NYC '91; Thomas Solomon's Garage, Los Angeles, *Lamp Light* '92; Terrain Gallery, San Francisco, May '93.

Selected group exhibitions:

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, *Systems* '90; Terrain Gallery, San Francisco '90; Luhring Augustine Hetzler, Santa Monica, CA '90; Security Pacific Bank, Los Angeles,



*NonrePRESENTation* '90 (catalog);  
Los Angeles, organized by L.A.  
Place Projects, *The Bradbury  
Building Show* '90; Whitney  
Museum at Equitable, NYC,  
*Contingent Realms* '90 (catalog);  
Thomas Solomon's Garage, Los  
Angeles, *Five Days* '91; Dorothy  
Goldeen Gallery, Santa Monica,  
CA, *Blanc Wall* '91.

Selected bibliography about the  
artist (see also catalogs under  
exhibitions):

Smith, Richard. "Updating the  
Sublime," *Visions* (Summer '90),  
pp. 12-17.

Johnston, John & Jeremy  
Gilbert-Rolfe, eds. "White  
Square," *New Observations* (Spring  
'90).

Pagel, David. "Linda Roush,"  
*Arts Magazine* (Mar. '91), p. 86.

Kandel, Susan. "Linda Roush,"  
*Art Issues* (Apr. '91), p. 36.

Zellen, Jody. "Linda Roush at  
the Santa Monica Museum of Art,"  
*Art in America* (Apr. '91), p. 174.

Pagel, David. "Being and  
Nothingness," *Los Angeles Times*  
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(Dec. '92), pp. 99-100.

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