

The Museum of Modern Art

RICHARD SERRA

Richard Serra was born in San Francisco, California, in 1939. He studied at the Berkeley and Santa Barbara campuses of the University of California, graduating with a B.S. in English Literature in 1961. During his undergraduate years he supported himself by working in steel mills. From 1961 to 1964 he studied at Yale University, where he earned B.A., M.A., and M.F.A. degrees, and held the position of instructor. He also worked with Josef Albers on his historic book The Interaction of Color (1963).

During the mid-sixties Serra spent a year in Paris on a Yale Traveling Fellowship and a year in Florence on a Fulbright grant, and he traveled in Greece, North Africa, Spain, and Turkey. In 1966 he moved to New York and became acquainted with Carl Andre, Chuck Close, Philip Glass, Eva Hesse, Jasper Johns, Joan Jonas, Donald Judd, and Steve Reich, among others. He began producing rubber and neon-tubing works and collaborated with Philip Glass on artistic projects, as well as in a furniture-moving enterprise. In the very late sixties Serra began to capture critical attention with his series of molten- and cast-lead works (Splashings and Castings) and lead rolls and lead props. During this time he made his first studio films and linear drawings, began to work in steel, and collaborated with Joan Jonas on video, film, and performance pieces. His first solo American exhibition was held at Leo Castelli's warehouse in 1969.

In 1970 Serra visited Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt during the construction of Spiral Jetty at the Great Salt Lake in Utah and helped with its layout. He and Joan Jonas traveled to Japan, where Serra participated

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in the Tokyo Biennale. That same year he installed To Encircle Base Plate Hexagram, Right Angles Inverted in the Bronx. Serra began the series of large outdoor urban and landscape works for which he has become distinguished with Pulitzer Piece: Stepped Elevation. Since then he has created site-specific works throughout the world, in countries such as France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, and West Germany, as well as in American cities in Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

In 1979 Serra was commissioned by the General Services Administration to create a permanent sculpture for the Federal Plaza in New York. When Tilted Arc was installed in 1981 it generated public controversy, which culminated in a public hearing (March 1985) to consider its removal.

The artist has been the subject of solo exhibitions internationally, including at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1977) and the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1983). In conjunction with the latter he installed Clara-Clara in the Tuileries Gardens at Place de la Concorde. Last year he also had a solo exhibition at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, West Germany, and received commissions for projects in France and Japan.

Serra has been the recipient of several exceptional awards in addition to those mentioned above, including a Guggenheim Fellowship (1970), a Skowhegan sculpture award (75-76), a Kaiserring Award for sculpture from the city of Goslar, West Germany (1981), and a fellowship from Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem (1983). In 1985 Serra was named Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by France and received the Carnegie Prize.

Richard Serra lives in New York City with his wife, Clara Weyergraf.

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