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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	MoMA PS1	I.A.51

**Michael Asher**

**The Clocktower**

**108 Leonard St. at Broadway N.Y.C.**

**March 20, through April 10, 1976**

**Tuesday-Saturday 1-6 P.M.**

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Institute for Art  
and Urban Resources, Inc.  
c/o The Clocktower  
13th floor  
108 Leonard Street  
New York, N. Y. 10013  
233-1096

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THE INSTITUTE  
FOR ART AND  
URBAN RESOURCES, INC.

Clocktower Office 108 Leonard Street NYC NY 10013  
Area Code (212) 233-1096

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 1976

TO THE LISTINGS EDITOR

CONTACT: Linda Blumberg - 233-1096

or: Kasper Koenig - 226-3887

MICHAEL ASHER AT THE CLOCKTOWER

The exhibition by artist Michael Asher, well known for his works with given space, will open at the Clocktower Gallery, 108 Leonard Street, corner of Broadway, on March 20, 1976. The exhibition will continue through April 10. The Clocktower Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 1:00 to 6:00 P.M.

The subject of the exhibition is the altered space providing the visitor with a situation that the artist made for this particular location. He will make use of all three floors of the gallery and its surrounding terraces including the floor containing the actual Clocktower.

Michael Asher lives in Los Angeles where he was born in 1943. He is considered among his colleagues to be one of the most advanced artists working with actual space.

He has previously shown at exhibitions in this city at:  
The Whitney Museum "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials" (1969);  
The Museum of Modern Art "Spaces" (1969);  
The New York Cultural Center "3-D into 2-D" (1973)  
The presentation at the Clocktower is his first one-man show in New York.

Michael Asher is presently writing a book documenting his numerous presentations and annotating his work and ideas in progress, to be published later this year within the Nova Scotia Series.

The Clocktower is the exhibition space of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Inc.. The Institute is a non-profit organization which includes the following projects: Workspace, Clocktower, Idea Warehouse and Coney Island Factory.

PLEASE PLACE IN LISTINGS UNDER MUSEUMS

Brendan Gill Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Alanna Hess Executive Director

Projects: Workspace, Clocktower, Idea Warehouse, Coney Island Factory.

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ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Art News, December 1974, Exhibit at Clare Copley Gallery in Los Angeles

Los Angeles Museum Art Bulletin no. 19, 1973, Walls, 1971

Artforum, April 1972, Michael Asher-The Thing of it is..., Peter Plagens

Art International, February 1970, Spaces Show at Museum of Modern Art, Ratcliff

Soho Weekly News, Thurs. April 1, 1976, April Kingsley, "A Clean Well-Lighted Place"

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MICHAEL ASHER

One Man Exhibitions

- 1969 La Jolla Museum of Art, La Jolla, California  
(November 7 - December 31, 1969)
- 1970 Gladys K. Montgomery Art Center, Pomona College,  
Claremont, California (February 13 - March 8, 1970)
- 1972 Market Street Program, Venice, California  
(March 22 - April 16, 1972)
- 1973 Gallery A-402, California Institute of the Arts,  
Valencia (January 8 - 11, 1973)
- Project Inc., Cambridge School, Weston, Massachusetts  
(August 18, 1973)
- Lisson Gallery, London  
(August 24 - September 16, 1973)
- Heiner Friedrich, Köln  
(September 4 - 28, 1973)
- Galleria Toselli, Milano  
(September 13 - October 8, 1973)
- 1974 Claire S. Copley, Los Angeles  
(September 21 - October 12, 1974)
- Anna Lgenowens Gallery, Nova Scotia College of Art  
and Design, Halifax  
(October 7 - 10, 1974)
- 1975 Otis Art Institute Gallery, Los Angeles  
(February 24 - March 9, 1975)

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MICHAEL ASHER

Group Exhibitions

- 1968 Art Gallery, University of California, San Diego  
"New Work/Southern California"  
(January 9 - February 4, 1968)
- Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon  
"West Coast Now" (February 9 - March 6, 1968)
- 1969 San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco  
"18'6" x 6'9" x 11'2½" x 47' x 11 3/16" x 29'8½" x 31'9 3/16"" (April 11 - May 3, 1969)
- Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California  
"The Appearing/Disappearing Image/Object"  
(May 11 - June 28, 1969)
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
"Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials"  
(May 19 - July 6, 1969)
- Pavillion of the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Wash-  
ington. "557087" (September 5 - October 5, 1969)
- Kunsthalle, Bern. "Pläne und Projekte als Kunst/  
Plans and Projects as Art" (November 8 - December 7,  
1969). Traveled to Aktionsraum I, München (November  
19 - December 11, 1969) and as "Künstler machen Pläne,  
andere auch!" to Kunsthaus, Hamburg (February 14 -  
March 15, 1970).
- Museum of Modern Art, New York  
"Spaces" (December 30, 1969 - March 1, 1970)
- 1970 Allen Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio  
"Art in the Mind" (April 17 - May 12, 1970)
- 1971 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles  
"24 Young Los Angeles Artists" (May 11 - July 4, 1971)
- 1972 Documenta 5, Kassel, Germany  
(June 30 - October 8, 1972)
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles  
"Ten Years of Contemporary Art Council Acquisitions"  
(December 19, 1972 - March 4, 1973)
- 1973 New York Cultural Center, New York  
"3D into 2D: Drawings for Sculpture"  
(January 19 - March 11, 1973)
- Pasadena Museum of Modern Art, Pasadena, California  
"The Betty and Monte Factor Family Collection"  
(April 24 - June 3, 1973)

Continued/

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## ARTFORUM

JUNE, 1976

### REVIEWS

#### New York

MICHAEL ASHER, *The Clocktower*

One of art's most irritating characteristics is its capacity to irritate. Bad art generates little irritation beyond a casual "Why bother to make it?" The irritation of good art is something else. Perhaps it stems from an uncertainty one never likes to admit to: whether or not the art really is good, how one ought to be reacting, and finally, if one is really "getting it."

Viewers don't like to feel they're being reviewed by art; it's a presumptuous switch in roles that gets under the skin. But that's what art based on perceptual manipulations often sets out to do, and as such it usually succeeds in being irritating. Whether or not it succeeds in being good art remains to be determined. One has to transcend one's irritation to find out.

MICHAEL ASHER, a West-Coast master of subliminal manipulation, recently turned his attentions to the Clocktower, an unorthodox *kunsthalle* claiming squatters' rights atop a deteriorating New York City municipal building. Lacking the slickness of conventional exhibition space, the Clocktower does not look kindly on conventional art. But it has harbored much unusual work that is

compatible with its idiosyncrasies. Asher's exhibition consisted of removing the doors and windows from all three levels of the tower, leaving it wide open to the early spring chill. I knew he had done this beforehand, but wondered as I climbed up what the effect would be.

The Clocktower's quarters are too well worn to convey any sense of Minimal precision, despite the reductive character of Asher's gesture. Its cubelike space is punctuated by a rusty spiral staircase and, despite an artifying whitewash, annotated with the graffiti of age—peeling paint, cracked plaster, remnants of plumbing. All this stands out when one approaches with esthetic feelers minutely tuned.

The removal of the doors and windows signals intentions that go beyond basic "empty gallery" art. My first inclination was to go out and walk around the balcony. Coming back in, I noticed the sun streaming in through the paneless window, felt the breeze and heard the sound of the traffic below. Far from making the gallery "emptier than empty," Asher is admitting the things that the conventional gallery takes pains to seal off. The outside, with all its real-life pollution, comes pouring in—Pandora's box reversed.

Somehow this invasion poses little threat to the Clocktower, which has never made any claims to pristine isolation. But seen in the context of Asher's art, the gesture is more problematic. Much of his previous work has depended on the sanitized, sealed-off gallery environment that this new piece destroys. Is he rejecting his own esthetic or extending it, adding the outdoors to his collection of manipulatory devices? I suspect the latter, since one feels his controlling presence as strongly in the Clocktower as in any of his earlier environments.

Sensing this control produces a sudden surge of irritation. The art is pushing you around, sending you scrambling for its subliminal effects without having the courtesy to provide adequate cues. Once you make the outside/inside connection, you think you've got it. Then it dawns on you that the work is also about the process of making that connection. It comments on awareness itself by forcing you to think about how it ought to affect you. When I was a kid I remember trying very hard to feel a year older on my birthday; now I try not to. At the Clocktower, after pushing myself to such a point of awareness and subtracting the irritation, I found the balance to be in Asher's favor.

NANCY FOOTE  
arc



Michael Asher, installation view, *The Clocktower*, 1976.

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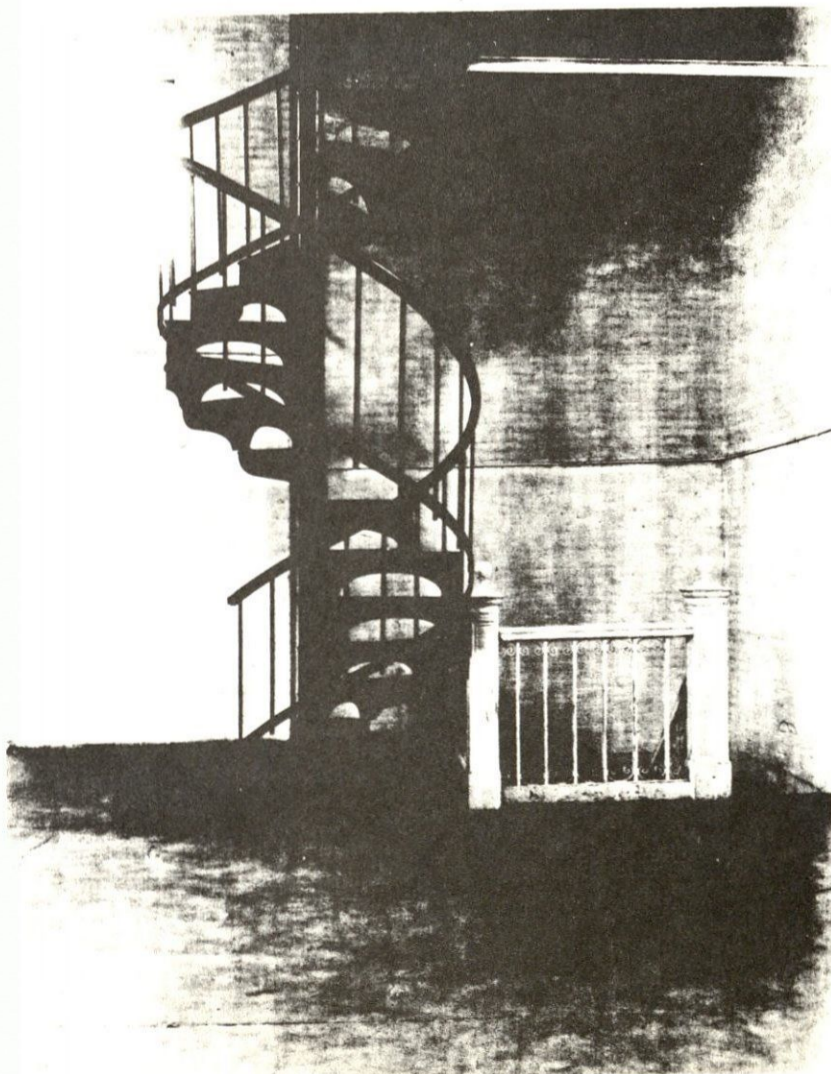
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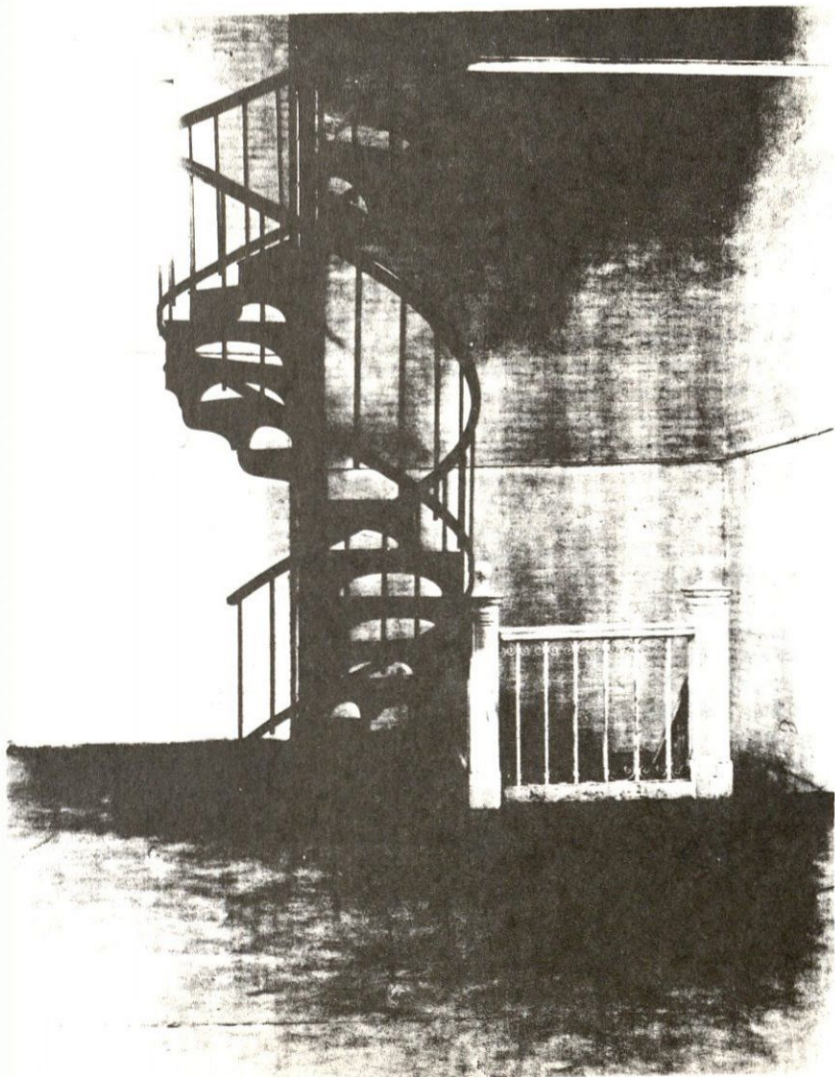
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## SOHO WEEKLY NEWS

Thursday, April 1, 1976

O N A R T

# A Clean Well-Lighted Place

### APRIL KINGSLEY

The wide white spaces of Michael Asher are cool, clean and airy. They give you a sense of yourself, a feeling of elation, and an awareness of the space around you. Art is consciousness expanding. Though few visitors to his current show at the Clocktower (15 Leonard Street) realized it since there was no "piece" to look at, Asher's work was affecting them, altering their consciousness, in some way. What did he do? He painted the walls and floors (using ordinary white latex on the walls and gray enamel on the floors), he removed the door to the ramparts surrounding the upper gallery and the window panes around the top of the walls of the lower ones. What happened to the viewer entering these empty rooms after climbing the stairs to the tower after riding an

elevator to the 12th floor? Swooshy sounds of the traffic below, clacking helicopters and droning Cessnas, tugboat horns, the general hum of the city's machinery buffeted one's ears along with the air that rushed in around you from every side. The effect was heady. The walls seemed luminous; the floor felt like a floating plane of gray suspended high above the city. The open door in the upper gallery pulled you outside to experience the air and the noises more directly. There you could circumnavigate the whole block of space you'd just been in and realize its cubic volume as an object.

Asher's exhibition shouldn't have surprised anyone familiar with his previous work—air pieces and empty white rooms, some with white noise generated to hush the sounds. (He did his first empty room

sculpture by accident in 1964 when he painted a friend's loft and lived in the empty rectangle for a few months, leaving it only when winter forced him to install a heater, which spoiled the feeling he had for the space.) Like a few other Californians interested in creating room-size sculptures which are to be experientially perceived, Asher is always building walls or manipulating given spaces to turn them into objects. Appreciating an Asher piece is a process of making many small distinctions between non-electrically illuminated surfaces, sound, and air quality. He only uses the painted walls and natural light—no projected images like James Turrell, neon or video like Nauman, glass like Bell or scrims like Robert Irwin. While the perfect (fetish) finish to walls and floors that Asher usually has was lacking, the

Clocktower space had some of the requisite proportions and, most importantly, it had good natural light and air.

This kind of sculpture is comparable to Ad Reinhardt's black paintings in its sacramental quality. One must adjust one's eyes and mind to the new situation it presents in order to begin to "get into it." Long immersion can be like a trance or an Alpha wave state. It's a kind of self-hypnosis in which your self-awareness and your mental set are freed and enhanced to the point of exaltation. Frantic New Yorkers usually have more difficulty appreciating this type of art than others, especially Californians, who are in tune with the atmosphere, the light quality and the meditative ambience about, for and which it is created.

Soho Weekly News review  
of Michael Asher's exhibition  
at the Clocktower.

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