

The Museum of Modern Art

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PROJECTS: ALISON WILDING

November 21, 1987 - February 2, 1988

The Museum of Modern Art's PROJECTS series continues November 21, 1987, with the first American museum exhibition of work by British sculptor Alison Wilding. Organized by Beatrice Kernan, assistant curator, Department of Drawings, PROJECTS: ALISON WILDING consists of three wall reliefs and four freestanding sculptures. The exhibition remains on view through February 2, 1988.

In her sculpture, Wilding blends abstraction and allusion to produce works of uncommon beauty and expressive resonance. Created from such materials as sheets of cut metal, wood, and rubber, the pieces often evoke images from nature by virtue of their curved or swollen forms. Sources for the artist's highly personal style can be found in recent sculpture, as well as in the iconography of abstract Surrealism, the purism of Constantin Brancusi, and the biomorphism of Hans Arp.

In several works of 1984-86, Wilding pairs objects, setting up complex relationships. Ms. Kernan writes, "the interaction of sculptural elements within each work is metaphoric and suggestive of rich and often paradoxical relationships. The exchange between sculptural components can speak alternately or simultaneously of such states as threat and protection, or alienation and accord." In Nature: Blue and Gold (1984), for example, two forms--a polished brass oval and a wooden ovoid rubbed to a deep blue--are interlocked in a precarious balance. Their connection is ambiguous: the brass and wooden pieces appear both to support and to overwhelm one another. The contrast between the

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sharp, highly reflective metal and the carved, darkened wood heightens the duality of this deceptively simple composition.

More recently, Wilding has turned primarily to single-form metal sculptures to elaborate upon her sheet-metal cutting technique and to explore the interchange between containing sheath and internal volume. In Hearth (1986), for example, an elegant arabesque of steel defines an almost palpable space. As Ms. Kernan writes, "Solid and void are delicately balanced in this composition, which would seem to evoke a priestly figure with gently inclined head or a Madonna protecting the world in the enclosed sanctuary of her mantle."

Born in 1948 in Lancashire, England, Wilding studied at the Royal College of Art, London, and Ravensbourne College of Art and Design, Kent. Her work has been featured in individual gallery exhibitions in New York, London, Cambridge, and Milan, and has been represented in several international group exhibitions, including the Venice and São Paulo biennials.

Designed to present recent work by contemporary artists, the current PROJECTS series is based on the Museum's original PROJECTS exhibitions, which were held from 1971 to 1982. The artists presented are chosen by representatives of the Museum's six curatorial departments in a process involving an active dialogue and close critical scrutiny of new developments in the visual arts. PROJECTS is made possible by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lannan Foundation, and J.P. Morgan & Co. Incorporated. Additional support for this exhibition has been provided by The British Council. ALISON WILDING will be followed by ROSEMARY TROCKEL (February 13 - April 3, 1988).

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