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TONY SMITH, BRYANT PARK, AND BODY POLITICS IN JOHN LINDSAY'S NEW YORK

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On the morning of January 20, 1967, Tony Smith arrived in Bryant Park in Midtown Manhattan to meet a truck full of his stark plywood sculptures, ready for assembly. This was to be an important day for the artist and the city. It was Smith's first solo exhibition in New York and the first sculpture exhibition organized by the city (Figure 1). It introduced Smith's work to a broad audience and established a new approach to public space advocated by John Vliet Lindsay, who was inaugurated Mayor of New York City one year earlier. This exhibition served as a model for the instrumental use of art to revitalize the city and reorganize the body politic. Bryant Park was the site of competing claims for authority in 1960s New York. The Lindsay administration fought for control against the gay community that used the park and the previous generation of power brokers that shaped New York's public spaces. Public sculpture was the medium through which this dispute materialized. Smith's sculptures were deployed to change the use of Bryant Park, discouraging activities deemed deviant, encouraging a safe space of corporate leisure, and attracting a public that conformed to Lindsay's ideals. By aligning his administration with vanguard sculpture, Lindsay projected an image of progressive civic authority. At the same time, the failure of the exhibition in Smith's eyes motivated his pursuit of a sculptural form appropriate to an urban context, with the phenomenological potential to address the problem of the body in the city.

This article assesses the urban significance of Smith's sculpture and the political stakes of the Lindsay administration's use of vanguard sculpture to revitalize the public spaces of New York City. The phenomenological turn in mid-1960s sculpture, in which Smith played an important role, resonated with city politics and contemporaneous theories of urban design. In all three fields, the mobile body was posited as a site of knowledge. However, the body in the city is always charged with race and gender and the authority over the embodied production of knowledge is rarely distributed with equality. Lindsay is typically remembered for his politics of tolerance and his support of marginalized and

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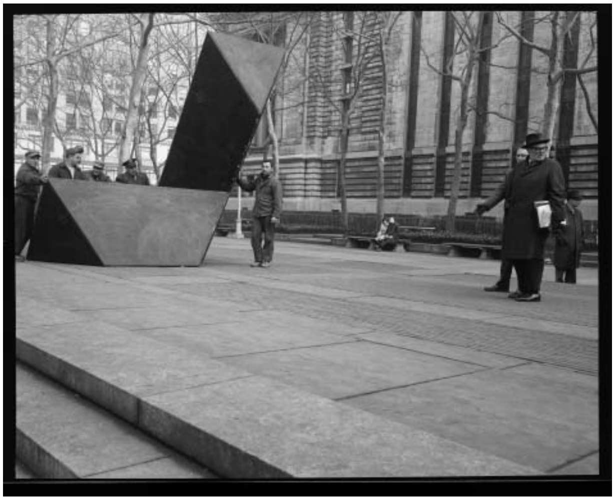

Figure 1. Tony Smith. *Amaryllis*. Bryant Park, New York City. 1967. Photograph: New York City Parks Department. © 2017 Tony Smith Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

minority groups. Lindsay's tolerance, however, did not readily extend to the gay community. Lindsay considered the increasingly open presence of the gay community to be a threat to his corporate image of the city and his national political ambitions. The Tony Smith exhibition was planned at a moment of intense condemnation of gay cruising in Bryant Park by members of the Lindsay administration, including Thomas Hoving, Lindsay's Parks Commissioner and the organizer of the exhibition.

The instrumental use of Smith's sculptures to reorient the park and to counter the queer appropriation of public space is a key episode in the postwar development of public art. It sheds important light on the Lindsay administration's politics of public space and, more generally, on the civic deployment of art to shape the use of space. It is also a crucial moment in the development of Smith's sculpture. There is no evidence to suggest that Smith was aware or supportive of the Lindsay administration's homophobic rhetoric of exclusion in Bryant Park. However, after the Bryant Park exhibition closed, and dissatisfied with the relation of his work to the city, Smith worked to develop an alternative mode of urban sculpture on phenomenological grounds that incorporated the mobile body and encouraged social exchange and inclusiveness. Smith's idea of urban sculpture was directly informed by the shape of the city and the potential of aesthetic experience to provoke an intensified awareness of self, others, and urban form. His new work also refused the gendered oppositions at play in Bryant Park between abstraction and figuration, imposition and reciprocity, public rectitude and decadence. His subsequent pursuit of urban sculpture as an embodied field of exchange and inclusion suggests the limits of these oppositions, even as they remain entrenched in the idea of modernism.

Smith's sculpture had been exhibited just a few times prior to the show in Bryant Park. He was represented by a single sculpture in the *Black, White and Grey* exhibition held at the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1964, the 1966 Whitney Annual, and the *Primary Structures* show at The Jewish Museum in the same year. His first solo exhibition was hosted jointly by Hartford's Wadsworth Atheneum and Philadelphia's Institute of Contemporary Art in late 1966. Most works in these early exhibitions, including those in the Bryant Park show, were simple geometric forms constructed in plywood and roughly painted with a dull black finish. Several works were based on simple combinations of rectangular prisms and they all compelled the viewer to physically engage with them. *The Elevens Are Up* (1963)*,* which was included in the *Black, White, and Grey* show, was composed of two rectangular prisms, each 8 × 8 × 2 ft, placed in parallel with a 4-ft gap between them. It was, therefore, a cubic form with a passage, allowing the viewer to traverse the interior of the sculpture. Other sculptures, such as *Willy* (1962), were composed of asymmetrical, sprawling and arching combinations of tetrahedral and octahedral forms. Most famously, Smith ordered a simple cube, the 6-ft *Die* (1962), to be fabricated in steel. The plywood sculptures were built and first displayed in the yard of Smith's house and studio in South Orange, New Jersey. Before landing in his yard, *Die* was fabricated by the Industrial Welding Company of Newark, after Smith encountered the manufacturer's billboard on his commute from South Orange to Manhattan.[1]

The suburban context in which Smith lived and worked was likely how many people, particularly the New York audience, were first introduced to his work. In an interview with Wagstaff, published in the December 1966 *Artforum*, 10 of the 16 photographs of Smith's sculpture were set in his South Orange yard, installed on the lawn and framed by trees and shrubs (Figure 2).[2] This interview, and Smith's sculpture, became a ubiquitous point of reference among his peers and critics, who were alternately attracted to or repelled by Smith's account of boundless aesthetic experience on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. In an oft-quoted passage, Smith described the trip:

> When I was teaching at Cooper Union in the first year or two of the fifties, someone told me how I could get on to the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. I took three students and drove from somewhere in the Meadows to New Brunswick. It was a dark night and there were no lights or shoulder markers, lines, railings, or anything at all except the dark pavement moving through the landscape of the flats, rimmed by hills in the distance, but punctuated by stacks, towers, fumes, and colored lights. This drive was a revealing experience. The road and much of the landscape was artificial, and yet it couldn't be called

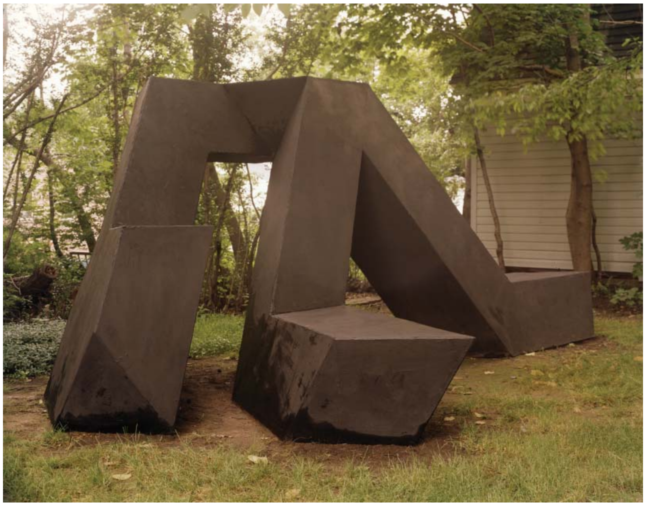

Figure 2. Tony Smith. *Willy*. South Orange, NJ. 1962 (constructed). Photographer unknown. © 2017 Tony Smith Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

> a work of art. On the other hand, it did something for me that art had never done. At first I didn't know what it was, but its effect was to liberate me from many of the views I had had about art. It seemed that there had been a reality there which had not had any expression in art.[3]

Smith's critics and younger peers seized on this passage. Its fecundity for the expansive aesthetic ambitions of the 1960s was recognized immediately, debated in several of the most important critical texts on minimal art, and has subsequently become a standard point of reference in historiography.[4] The original debate over the aesthetics of embodied experience, initiated by Michael Fried and Robert Morris, played a crucial role in the canonical formation of minimal art.[5] Morris' turn to phenomenology prioritized a mobile experience of sculpture that was open and unfolded in time, analogous to Smith's experience on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike and anathema to Fried's aesthetics of instantaneity. However, this focus on the body obscured the local significance of Smith's story.[6] By 1966, Smith's mystical drive on the New Jersey Turnpike was not a transgressive act; it was a typical experience of the suburban commuter.

As Fried, Morris, and many others recognized, Tony Smith was highly attuned to embodied sensation and perception and how movement impacted the reception of his sculpture. What was less often recognized was Smith's equal sensitivity to the different modes of mobility that framed aesthetic experience. For Smith, the embodied experiences of driving on a highway or around South Orange, walking on a city street or through Bryant Park, were fundamentally different. As contemporaneous urban theorists suggested, the sensorial information gleaned from these distinct environments and mobilities was, likewise, specific to them.[7] Kevin Lynch, in his classic 1961 study of urban form, *The Image of the City*, argued that the city and its sprawling infrastructures come to be known through the body. Urban knowledge, according to Lynch, is a product of immediate and concrete perception. This knowledge is impacted by the specific ways in which the body moves through space as a pedestrian, driver, or otherwise. Lynch argued that urban design must account for these differences in embodied experience if the city is to be legible to the public.[8] Smith's recognition of these differences was only hinted at in his interview with Wagstaff. Yet Smith's privileging of a mobile, embodied experience of sculpture that unfolds over time echoed an idea of the city posited by Lynch.

Smith's account of his drive on the unfinished highway was celebrated for its identification of significant form in the industrial landscape. Smith also called for a radically new approach to public art. This new public art was to be drawn from the urban environment. "I view art as something vast," Smith professed:

> I think highway systems fall down because they are not art. Art today is an art of postage stamps. I love the Secretariat Building on the UN, placed like a salute. In terms of scale, we have less art per square mile, per capita, than any society ever had. We are puny. [. . .] In Hackensack a huge gas tank is all underground. I think of art in a public context and not in terms of mobility of works of art. Art is just there.[9]

In some ways, this passage reflects a conventional view of public art as a means to express the grandeur and authority of the state. Smith's departure from convention occurs with the equation of public art and public works.

Smith was afforded the opportunity to produce "art in a public context" for his 1966 solo exhibition in Hartford and Philadelphia. This joint exhibition, curated by Samuel Wagstaff, Jr. and Sam Green, directly informed Smith's show in Bryant Park. Both venues included sculptures in public spaces adjacent to their respective museum buildings. As the Wadsworth Atheneum was the larger venue, Smith pushed to include more works outside the museum. Smith and Wagstaff placed four sculptures in Tower Square, a public space between the museum and neighboring Travelers Tower. A fifth piece, *Generation*, was included in the catalogue but not constructed for the exhibition due to a lack of funds. Thirty feet in height, width, and depth, with three openings that a viewer could walk through, *Generation* was conceived for a public square.[10] It was to be, in Smith's words, "a monument that people can walk under and through," likely intended for Hartford's Constitution Plaza.[11] Nevertheless, Smith constructed four sculptures for Hartford — *Amaryllis*, *Spitball*, *The Snake is Out*, and *Cigarette* — all plywood mock-ups based on the modular extension of a tetrahedral unit. Like *Generation*,

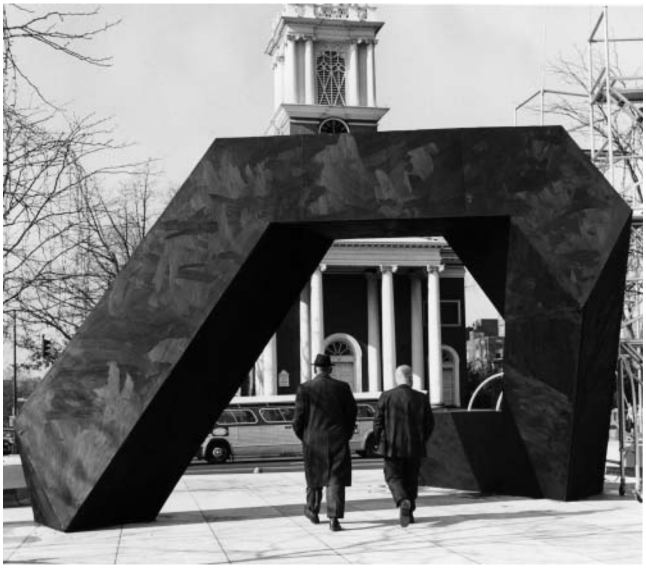

Figure 3. Tony Smith. *Cigarette*. Tower Square, Hartford, CT. 1966. Photograph: Edward Saxon. © 2017 Tony Smith Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

these works were conceived to stimulate physical engagement and alter the experience of public space. The 15-ft tall, 26-ft wide *Cigarette* was placed in Tower Square (Figure 3). Composed of four tetrahedral prisms, *Cigarette* formed a sprawling arch through which people could walk. The arch was installed to frame the rotunda entrance to the Beaux-Arts Travelers Tower and the neoclassical portico of Hartford's Center Church.

Smith left no doubt about the relation between these works and the public context in which they were installed. "I think of them as seeds or germs that could spread growth or disease," he wrote in the exhibition catalogue. "They are not easily accommodated to ordinary environments, and adjustments would have to be made were they to be accepted. If not strong enough, they will simply disappear; otherwise they will destroy what is around them, or force it to conform to their needs. They are black and probably malignant."[12] These dark, asymmetric forms stood in stark contrast to the architecture surrounding them. *Cigarette*, placed between the street and the entrance to one of Hartford's largest office buildings, also impinged upon the routine movement of workers traversing the space, forcing them to go through or around the sculpture. In Tower Square, Smith was given his first opportunity to use sculpture to disrupt the public's everyday experience of the environment. To be accepted, as Smith warned, *Amaryllis*, *Spitball*, *The Snake is Out*, and *Cigarette* demanded social, physical, perceptual, and spatial adjustments. Smith's unpredictable, inassimilable forms altered the way the public engaged urban space through the body, disrupting regular patterns of movement, as well as the social and architectural organization of space.

Two weeks after the exhibition opened in Hartford, Wagstaff wrote to Thomas Hoving, suggesting an exhibition of Smith's work in a city park.[13] Hoving, who was appointed New York's City's Parks Commissioner by John Lindsay in January of 1966, signed on to the idea and assigned Barbaralee Diamonstein, Special Assistant for Cultural Affairs, to work out the details. Hoving noted that a park would be ideal for Smith's work, and expressed delight at introducing New Yorkers to the artist.[14] Wagstaff assumed the exhibition would take place in Central Park. However, Hoving and Diamonstein decided on Bryant Park. Diamonstein wrote to Smith to clarify the location. "The open park area against the strong architectural background," Diamonstein suggested, "will, we think, make a particularly effective and relevant setting."[15] Open space and architecture were not the only merits. Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, Bryant Park was a key site in Lindsay's plan to reform the city's open spaces, reorient the body politic, and project a new image of the city.

While running for mayor in 1965, Lindsay made the revitalization of parks a cornerstone of his campaign. He argued that the health of the parks was tied directly to the health of the public, the economy, and the city.[16] Less than one month before Election Day, Lindsay released a white paper on *Parks and Recreation*, authored by Hoving. The white paper argued for the use of parks to counter the urban renewal strategies of Robert Moses and address their debilitating social effects. Lindsay and Hoving proposed the rehabilitation of decaying parks and the construction of new parks in slums and deindustrialized areas.[17] The park system, Hoving argued, was conceived to support "man's social nature" through "open spaces for health and recreation."[18] He imagined the city's parks to be spaces apart from and devoid of urban activity.[19] Hoving emphasized the need to restore pastoral park spaces in Midtown Manhattan, to provide places of rest and stimulation for office workers. The Midtown park, Hoving suggested, "should be imaginative — something more than pavement to walk on. It should be a delight to the eye. . ."[20] In Bryant Park, the Lindsay administration sought to project an image of corporate hospitality through the imaginative use of open space. Moreover, Hoving and Lindsay sought to organize a body politic in the Midtown park that conformed to his corporate ideal. The Tony Smith exhibition was part of the plan to produce this new, corporate public.

The Lindsay administration's goals for Bryant Park were in stark contrast to the realities of its use in the mid-1960s. It was not a pastoral oasis for office workers, nor a place to rest. For the public that Lindsay and Hoving sought to attract, Bryant Park was a site of danger, deviance, vagrancy and vice. In 1964, Newbold Morris, Parks Commissioner under Robert Wagner, complained that the park was a refuge for derelicts. Morris proposed a café to encourage a new clientele.[21] Hoving rejected his predecessor's plan but agreed with Morris' assessment. Along with the drunks, vagrants, and litter, Hoving added "homosexual activity" to the list of deviance afflicting the park.[22] Hoving described the situation in ominous terms. Despite police reports suggesting that Bryant Park was not a center of violent crime but merely a hangout for "winos and homosexuals," Hoving pronounced it "a disaster area because of the people who frequent it. . .the slimiest elements of society." He hoped to transform the park into "an entertainment magnet, attracting better people."[23] In 1966, Hoving announced a plan to rehabilitate the park and its clientele by introducing a curfew, installing lights, banning drinking, and arranging daytime entertainment.[24] While Lindsay's progressive administration was generally lauded for its tolerance and support for oppressed groups, New York's gay community remained a target of raids, entrapment, and institutional repression throughout the 1960s.[25] Evidently, there were some bodies that did not conform to Lindsay's and Hoving's image of the city.

The struggle for control of Bryant Park played out on its public sculpture through rival acts of appropriation. According to Andrew Petrochko, supervisor of the park, gay men were the biggest headache because, in addition to taunting businessmen, they painted the faces of the nineteenth-century memorials to Goethe and William Earl Dodge with lipstick and rouge.[26] This cosmetic appropriation constituted a claim made by the gay community to the public space, marking Bryant Park as a cruising site. Petrochko's description of the painted faces of Goethe and Dodge, and Hoving's characterization of the park's users as the "slimiest elements of society," played into public anxiety about the increasingly open presence of gay men on the city's streets and in its parks. Richard Doty, in an essay on the gay "colonization" of the city for *The New York Times* in 1963, described painted faces of men, not just as a sign of homosexuality, but of prostitution. It was a symptom, according to Doty, of the "inverted world" shaped by gay men in New York.[27]

One of Hoving's first tactics to combat what he perceived as the inverted world of Bryant Park was to bring in Tony Smith's sculptures. For Hoving, Smith's sculptures could straighten out the queered space by countering the appropriation of Goethe and Dodge. On the one hand, Smith's dark, brooding, and severe forms would seem an odd choice. Given his characterization of their malignancy, Smith's sculptures might seem more compatible with those social elements deemed "slimiest" by Hoving. On the other hand, Smith claimed that his sculptures were most at home in a bucolic suburban ideal and potentially destructive in other surroundings. "The pieces seem inert or dormant in nature," he wrote, "and that is why I like them there, but they may appear aggressive, or in hostile territory, when seen among other artifacts."[28] Hoving sought, one could argue, to leverage the hostility of Smith's sculpture to destroy any vestige of urban presence in the park. In so doing, Hoving sought a return to the nineteenth-century pastoral spaces in the city, which were conceived, as he suggested in 1965, to "eradicate even the faintest trace of urban activity."[29]

Hoving was certainly aware of this suburban frame and Smith's characterization of his work's hostility to urban space. In his letter to Wagstaff accepting the exhibition, Hoving gratefully acknowledged the receipt of Wagstaff's exhibition catalogue, which included several photographs of Smith's sculptures installed in bucolic suburban settings.[30] Smith's statement regarding the hostility of his sculpture when removed from nature was even included in a Department of Parks Press Release.[31] The implicit goal in introducing Smith's work to Bryant Park, therefore, was to transfer their bucolic nature to the heart of the city, supplanting urban deviance with suburban social values. The malignant potential that Smith attributed to his sculpture had the functional value, for the Lindsay administration, of disrupting the existing social and spatial order of the park. In the mid-1960s, cruising was seen as an explicitly urban activity and its eradication in Bryant Park was a priority for the Lindsay administration. The condemnation of gay cruising in city parks echoed the homosexual panic that proliferated in popular media the 1950s and 1960s.[32] The suburbs, and the attendant associations of domesticity and family values, were implicitly positioned as both immune to this threat and the antidote to it.

The pastoral ideal that Hoving and Lindsay sought to restore in Midtown parks might have described Bryant Park prior to Robert Moses' 1934 overhaul. Moses replaced the existing Victorian design, featuring a network of small walking paths and scattered groups of trees, with a formal French garden design.[33] Originally designed as a bucolic place for a leisurely stroll, Moses transformed Bryant Park into a stately display. Moses' Bryant Park was dominated by a great, sunken lawn framed by volute hedges, a stone balustrade, a grid of garden beds planted with London Plane trees, and the rear face of the Beaux-Arts New York Public Library. Five of Smith's sculptures were placed on Moses' great lawn: *Night*, *We Lost*, *Marriage*, and *The Snake is Out*. *Amaryllis* and *Spitball* sat on the park's upper terrace, between the great lawn and the library (Figure 4). *Cigarette* was installed at the formal entrance to the park, on 6th Avenue at 41st Street (Figure 5). For the most part, the sculptures were arranged in harmony with the rigid, formal garden design, processing in pairs along the park's central east–west axis. Only *Cigarette* and *The Snake is Out*, the most complex and looming forms, disrupted the tidy organization of space. As in Hartford, *Cigarette* was situated to function as an arch and obstruction, reorganizing the flow of movement at the park's entrance, forcing pedestrians to go through or around it. Likewise, *The Snake is Out*, also a massive arching form composed of a tetrahedral prism, stood between the park entrance and the library. This position not only

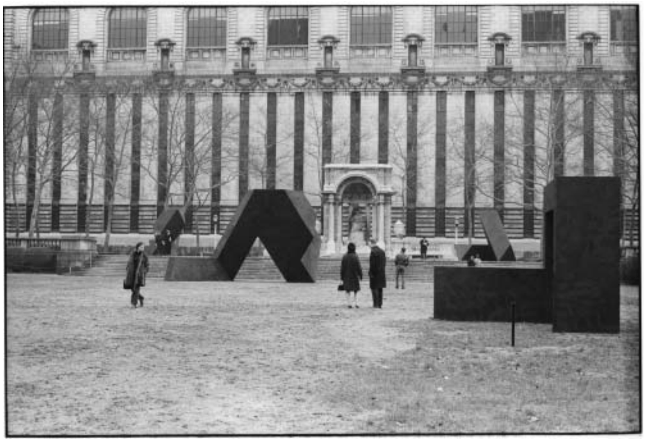

Figure 4. Tony Smith. *Snake* and *Marriage*. Bryant Park, New York City. 1967. Photograph: David Gahr. © 2017 Tony Smith Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

obstructed the stairs leading from the great lawn to the upper terrace, but also disrupted the sight lines structured by Bryant Park's landscaped features that frame the library as the primary view. *Cigarette* and *The Snake is Out* disrupted the sensorial organization of the park and the spatial protocols of movement that followed from that organization. The ambulatory experience associated with Smith's work also constituted a return to the leisured walking that was part of Bryant Park's original design.

Albeit temporary, Smith's exhibition was a challenge to the spatial legacy of Moses. Smith's sculptures constituted an aesthetic negation of the figurative

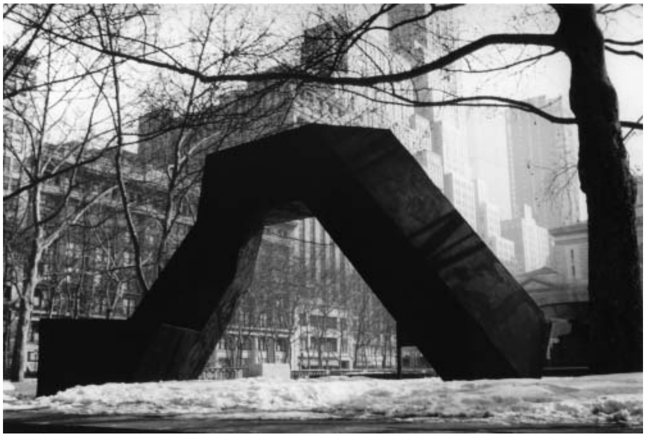

Figure 5. Tony Smith. *Cigarette*. Bryant Park, New York City. 1967. Photograph: John A. Ferrari. © 2017 Tony Smith Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

sculptures permanently populating the park. The exhibition not only countered the appropriation of public sculpture by the gay community, it also countered Moses' authority over New York's public space. During his long tenure as Parks Commissioner, Moses' taste for nineteenth-century figurative sculpture and rejection of abstraction were well known.[34] In 1960, when Newbold Morris assumed leadership of the Parks Department and served as Moses' surrogate, patronage of nineteenth-century public sculpture became the department's unofficial policy, as Harriet Senie has argued.[35] When Hoving installed Tony Smith's monumental geometries on Moses' great lawn, the departure from the former regime could not have been starker. Numerous critics viewed the exhibition as the advent of a new era for the city's parks and for the civic commitment to advanced public art.[36] Hoving effectively associated the Lindsay administration with vanguard sculpture and, implicitly, aligned Moses with a retrograde and conservative past.

It is hard to see how Smith's sculptures were not more at home in the city than the suburbs. Surely their asymmetric, geometric forms cutting through space in unpredictable angles contrasted with the insistent verticality of the surrounding architecture. Their rough black-painted surfaces diverged from the orderly arrangements of grey stone, red brick, glass and steel surrounding them. It is even harder to see how these formal qualities would communicate a suburban or pastoral ideal. Yet this is exactly how they were received. In an extraordinary review of the exhibition in *The New York Times*, Grace Glueck simply recorded quotes from park-goers, most of whom described the sculpture as a relief from the urban environment. "It gives a little class, a little culture, to the park," reported a visitor from Queens. "They make the park look more like a park," a Department of Sanitation employee added.[37] A feature article in *Time* suggested that Smith wanted to create "architectonic mastodons, varied enough to refresh the eye after a stark grid of city walls and streets…"[38] Harold Rosenberg, likewise, set Smith's sculptures apart from the experience of the city. "Smith's constructions, for all their feeling of weight, communicate a sense of intangibility alien to this park enclosed by high buildings and heavy traffic," Rosenberg reported. "The geometrical compositions, all different, are beautifully angled to infuse into their immediate surroundings a sense of gentle motion, as of a ship at anchor."[39]

Even those critics who asserted the architectural basis of Smith's work recognized its difference from the buildings surrounding Bryant Park. Hilton Kramer described the influence of the International Style on Smith, but distanced the sculpture from what he argued was a bankrupt architectural style. Kramer credited Smith with preserving "a purity of vision now fallen on evil times."[40] Finally, Michael Benedikt wrote, "Coming from the bustle of the surrounding streets and onto the Smith site was, indeed, an event in itself. The works have an enormous calming presence…" Benedikt seemed completely convinced by the pastoral transformation of Bryant Park provoked by Smith's sculpture. "He seems to want to engage, not rectilinear box structures. . .but the irregular outdoors, with its rolling ground, indeterminate lateral spaces, skies."[41] Throughout the exhibition, critics described Smith's sculptures as gentle forms around which cohere an oasis that provides sensorial relief from the city.

For Lindsay and Hoving, the critics' bucolic experience accomplished the goal to establish a pastoral retreat in the heart of Midtown Manhattan. Smith's sculptures seemed to successfully recast Bryant Park as a place to relax, refresh the senses, and immerse in nature. It is not so clear, however, that Smith's work was as successful in disrupting the deviant behavior that the Lindsay administration saw as the greatest threat to the park. There is no evidence to suggest that the exhibition dissuaded the gay community that used the space. Moreover, one could argue that Smith's sculptures were conducive to cruising. The placement of Smith's works disrupted the park's sight lines, which would allow for surveillance, and introduced large, shadowy objects that encouraged lingering. Numerous critics, theorists, and artists, also contended that Smith's sculptures heightened one's experience of self, others and the environment. Cruising, in many ways, was already a model of this heightened perceptive and social experience. As Mark Turner has argued, cruising has always constituted a means of cutting through the alienation and anonymity of everyday urban life.[42] It is a way of moving through the city with a heightened perception of environment and others with an explicitly social goal. Turner's definition of cruising as "a *process* of walking, gazing, and engaging another (or others)" could also stand as a description of the aesthetic experience associated with Smith's sculpture.[43]

Scott Burton was an early critical advocate of Smith's work, publishing a substantial review of the 1966 exhibitions in Philadelphia and Hartford in *ARTnews*. Burton was among the only critics to associate the physical engagement compelled by Smith's work with an open, individual, and personal response. Burton largely agreed with the phenomenological reading of Smith's work, first described by Morris. "This is art of which we take direct physical cognizance," Burton suggested in a 1967 lecture. "We walk around it. All sculpture exists in physical space, of course, but what is new is to be made so aware of it."[44] For Burton, however, the expressive aspects of Smith's sculptures left room for an individual and associative experience that clearly distinguished his work from the imposed, homogenous experience and universal body assumed by other minimal art. "Tony Smith," Burton contended, "is the first artist in a very long time to bring that full, almost exuberant, physical awareness to sculpture."[45] Whereas Hoving saw Smith's work as a means of cultivating a space of exclusion and control, Burton saw the potential for an open space of inclusion to cohere around Smith's sculpture.

For Smith, Hoving, and the critics responding to the Bryant Park show, city, body, and sculpture were related terms. Smith described the works in the park as presences, suggesting their status as surrogate bodies.[46] The sculptures in Bryant Park were scaled to the body, according to Smith, rather than the city. "My pieces so far have not been made for city spaces," Smith asserted; "they have just been put into them."[47] They failed to satisfy because the architectural surround overwhelmed them. "What was plastic in suburbia," Smith wrote, "became graphic in the city."[48] When moved from his backyard in South Orange to Bryant Park, the works did not function as sculptures. They had no substantial relation to the city and were reduced to mere marks. Smith sought a truly urban sculptural form. To avoid the graphic reduction of sculpture, he incorporated the mobile body as a plastic element within the sculptural field. Smith articulated his idea of urban sculpture adequate to the scale of the city, yet conceived for the body, at a conference in Minneapolis on urban design and renewal.

The conference, "Hennepin: The Future of an Avenue," convened in April 1970 to assess the spatial, commercial, and architectural diversity of the main entertainment strip in Minneapolis. Responding to the abundant parking lots, strip clubs, bars, and their competing advertisements, the conference organizers sought ideas for making Hennepin Avenue and Downtown Minneapolis more appealing for the pedestrian.[49] In addition to Smith, presentations were given by Philip Johnson, Robert Venturi, M. Paul Friedberg, Walter Netsch, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, James Seawright, and Otto Piene.

Smith began his presentation with a diagnostic analysis of Minneapolis' spatial form and social problems. His argument closely follows Kevin Lynch's, *The Image of the City*, which assesses the legibility of the city and the public's perception of the urban environment. For Lynch, the spread of undifferentiated space and the shift between grid systems are obstacles to knowing the city. He argues for simple, repetitive, geometric forms to reinforce urban form and facilitate the public's understanding of it. Good urban design was the antidote, Lynch argued, of isolated and anonymous urban experience. A public with an entrenched understanding of the city would be more social and communicative. The key for Lynch was provoking an intensity of experience within the city that would combat the fragmentation of perception and social isolation of everyday life.[50]

The problem with downtown Minneapolis, Smith argued, echoing Lynch, is that the public could not perceive its form, nor understand the relation of the city center to the greater urban plan. Minneapolis is organized centrifugally, according to Smith, following the freeway system that loops around the city, but the downtown area is organized by a grid plan. This formal and spatial discordance makes it difficult for people to engage the center. Smith suggested that cities since the Renaissance had perspectival systems that organized the body in the city, prompting one to experience the urban plan concretely and immediately, but this is lacking in Minneapolis. "The city is in actual fact too spaced out," Smith argued.

"[S]o many buildings have been torn down, that when we are in the downtown area, instead of feeling the sense of the streets in the classical way…we have a sense of being somewhat lost — that is, one wanders around looking for the most intense urban life that Minneapolis offers."[51] According to Smith, Minneapolis needed symbolic and spatial elements to reorient the pedestrian and driver. He suggested that "what must be established is some kind of force which would intensify the urban life…"[52] To meet this need, Smith proposed a new sculptural form to orient the body to the grid — a sculpture as spatial field that would reinforce the grid form of Downtown Minneapolis. In the sculptural field, the body would be a plastic element, people could confront each other without impediment, and one would experience a greater intensity of urban life. The contextual frame of nature and the theoretical frame of the pastoral invoked by Smith in the mid-1960s are abandoned in Minneapolis in favor of an entirely urban conception of sculpture.

Smith's *Project for a Parking Lot*, presented at the Hennepin conference, was first conceived in 1968 as a direct response to urban renewal. Smith admitted that he would still tear down buildings, even though this often left residents with no place to go; however, instead of constructing offices, luxury apartments, and parking lots, Smith would leave open space. This space, Smith stipulated, would have no trees, no lamp posts, and no street furniture; it would simply be a square space paved with stone slabs arranged in a grid.[53] This would be a space, according to Smith, "where people could not only confront one another with any degree of identity that they cared to have, but where in a certain sense they might have a sense of themselves as unrelated to anything else…the human being walking across it and so on would create a certain kind of intense life which has many dimensions that can't be found in the routine patterns of transportation, business, home life and such things."[54] In *Project for a Parking Lot*, social and aesthetic experience are conflated, intensifying the former. Whereas Smith's sculptures were used by Hoving in Bryant Park to promote an exclusionary space, with *Project for a Parking Lot* Smith proposed a sculpture that was explicit in its inclusivity.

While Smith never realized *Project for a Parking Lot*, it was conceived while Smith worked on a sequence of sculptures immediately after the Bryant Park exhibition.[55] In several works developed between 1967 and 1970, starting with *Stinger*, Smith experimented with the open square and the accessible space of sculpture. *Stinger*, first exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in 1968, is a tetrahedral prism extending horizontally along the ground plane to form a square. The square has an opening, so that an otherwise enclosed interior space can be entered. *Stinger's* walls are 32 ft long and, like *Die*, 6 ft tall. In 1969, while teaching in Hawaii, Smith constructed *Hubris*, which was composed of two large squares each containing a grid of 81 smaller squares (Figure 6). One large grid

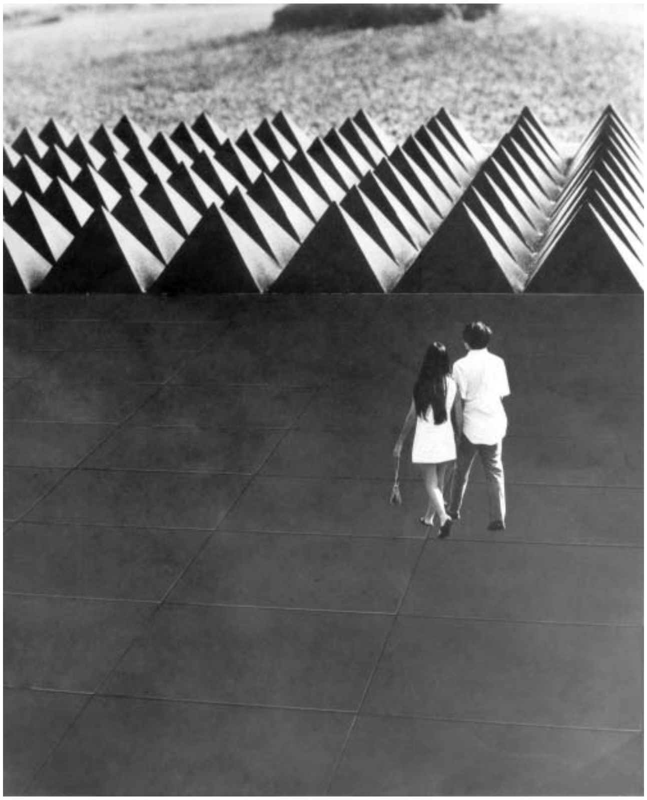

Figure 6. Tony Smith. Photomontage with *Hubris*. 1970. © 2017 Tony Smith Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

was an open space, while the other was populated by 81 abutting tetrahedrons. The two square grids constituted distinct spatial experiences. The former was intended to be accessible and traversable, while the latter was crowded and imposing. Smith experienced the work as essentially hostile and was surprised to learn that students played among the pyramids.[56] Smith also conceived *Haole Crater* for the University of Hawaii, which, while also never realized, bears a direct relationship to *Project for a Parking Lot*. *Haole Crater* was to have two pedestrian levels: a sunken square, accessible by ladder, and a raised sidewalk surrounding it. Smith described the work as follows:

> The lower square is, of course, necessary to sculpture as such. But I feel that people should be able to walk around it and look into it. [. . .] I also think that people should be able to cross the rim and descend into the pit; looking up, they would only see the sky. [. . .] No matter what, the sculpture requires the walk for purely plastic reasons.[57]

Keenly aware of the embodied experience of sculpture and the failure of the work in Bryant Park, Smith sought a form of sculpture as spatial field in *Stinger*, *Hubris*, *Haole Crater*, and several other works from the end of the 1960s. This sculptural space would incorporate the viewer as a plastic element. The sculpture is no longer a surrogate person. It is a field to organize the body as an element of form and a means of framing an intensely social space. With *Project for a Parking Lot*, this idea of a sculptural field for the body was tied explicitly to the spatial legacy of urban renewal and the difficulty of knowing the city through the body. On the envelope for his plane ticket to Minneapolis, Smith succinctly described the problem while observing an aerial view of the city and its surround: "Difficulty of orientation in spite of great clarity of grid itself — reason — sameness of building masses and open spaces. . ."[58] Smith's idea of a truly urban sculpture was conceived to reorient the body in the city and to heighten the legibility of the city through the body. The modernist opposition between figuration and abstraction, still at the center of the Bryant Park exhibition, is rejected in these subsequent works.

As *Project for a Parking Lot* was conceptualized in 1968, it cannot be considered a sculptural solution to a spatial problem specific to Minneapolis. Initially conceived a year after the Bryant Park exhibition, and with Smith's recognition of the graphic reduction of works like *Cigarette* in mind, *Project for a Parking Lot* was a direct response to the American city in the context of urban renewal. In Minneapolis, New York City, or South Orange, Smith conceived of sculpture as a means of addressing the problem of the city as a problem of the body. Smith's phenomenology was not a means for assessing the body in abstract space; rather, it was a means for concretely engaging the body in the specific space of the city and the suburbs. His sculpture was conceived to reorient urban space, to organize being in the city through the body, and to encourage social vitality between bodies.

Smith's work in Bryant park, and his trajectory following that exhibition, suggest that Smith was not just thinking about sculpture as an autonomous form imposed on a space. The problem of the body in the city was at the center of Smith's thinking about sculpture, just as it was for urban theorists such as Kevin Lynch. If the Bryant Park exhibition was an experiment in the imposition of form to control the use of public space, in *Project for a Parking Lot* Smith conceived of a far more open form of public art. Whether or not Smith was conscious of the Lindsay administration's exclusionary motives in Bryant Park, after the exhibition he almost immediately began to work against the idea of a public sculpture unrelated to urban form and imposed on the city. In developing *Project for a Parking Lot*, Smith sought to use sculpture to address an urban subject disconnected from the environment, the public, and the self. Rather than imposing form on the city as a means of controlling public space, Smith sought to frame an open space within the city that could encourage social, intersubjective exchange and an intense experience of self and others.

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NOTES

[1] "Master of the Monumentalists," *Time*, 13 Oct. 1967: 84.

[2] Samuel Wagstaff, Jr. "Talking to Tony Smith," *Artforum* 5.4 (1966): 14–19.

[3] Ibid., 19.

[4] The passage plays a particularly important role in the criticism of Lucy Lippard, who was Smith's most dedicated early advocate. See: Lucy Lippard, "Tony Smith: 'The Ineluctable Modality of the Visible,'" *Art International* 11.6 (Summer 1967): 24–27.

[5] Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," *Artforum* 4.6 (1966): 42–44; Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture Part 2," *Artforum* 5.2 (1966): 20–23; Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5.10 (Summer 1967): 19–20.

[6] There are a few notable exceptions that assess aspects of New Jersey's suburban identity. See Caroline Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 275–80, 315–18; and Kelly Baum, "On the Road," in *New Jersey as Non-Site* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Art Museum, 2013), 11–13.

[7] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960); Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John R. Meyer, *The View from the Road* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).

[8] Lynch, *Image of the City*, 1–13; Appleyard, Lynch and Meyer, *View from the Road*, 4–5.

[9] Wagstaff, Jr. "Talking to Tony Smith," 17.

[10] Samuel J. Wagstaff, Jr., *Tony Smith: Two Exhibitions of Sculpture* (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum & Institute of Contemporary Art, 1966), unpaginated; Samuel J. Wagstaff, Jr. to Thomas Hoving, 23 Nov. 1966, Series 1.1, Box 1, Folder 27, Samuel J. Wagstaff papers, c. 1932–85, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[11] Smith's plan is described in a memorandum from Samuel Wagstaff to James Elliot, Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum, 8 Jun. 1966, Tony Smith File, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art Archives.

[12] Tony Smith, quoted in Wagstaff, Jr., *Tony Smith*, unpaginated.

[13] Samuel J. Wagstaff, Jr. to Thomas Hoving, 23 Nov. 1966, Series 1.1, Box 1, Folder 27, Samuel J. Wagstaff papers, c. 1932–85, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[14] Thomas Hoving to Samuel J. Wagstaff, Jr., 2 Dec. 1966, Series 1.1, Box 1, Folder 27, Samuel J. Wagstaff papers, c. 1932–85, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[15] Barbaralee Diamonstein to Tony Smith, 17 Jan. 1967, Thomas Hoving File, Tony Smith Estate Archives, New York.

[16] Mariana Mogilevich, "Arts as Public Policy: Cultural Spaces for Democracy and Growth," in *Summer in the City: John Lindsay, New York, and the American Dream*, ed. Joseph P. Viteritti (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2014), 195–224.

[17] John Lindsay, *Parks and Recreation*, 8 Oct. 1965 (New York: Campaign Press Center, John V. Lindsay for Mayor, 1965), Series VI, Box 91, Folder 86, John Vliet Lindsay Papers (MS 592). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

[18] Ibid., 1.

[19] Ibid., 4.

[20] Ibid., 12.

[21] Guy Telise, "Cafe is Suggested for Bryant Park," *New York Times*, 4 Jun. 1964, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/06/04/0106976211.html (accessed 5 Nov. 2015).

[22] "Hoving Calls a Meeting to Plan for Restoration of Bryant Park," *New York Times*, 22 Jun. 1966, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/06/22/82811668.html?pageNumber=49 (accessed 5 Nov. 2015).

[23] Edward C. Burks, "Hoving to Upgrade Bryant Park Area," *New York Times*, 24 Jun. 1966. http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/06/24/82814888.html?pageNumber=17 (accessed 5 Nov. 2015).

[24] Ibid., 17.

[25] On the persecution of gay men in New York City parks in the postwar period, see: Roy Rozenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 479. On the criminalization of homosexuality in the 1960s and state violence against gay communities in New York, see: John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983); John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 293–5; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 214–54; and Christina B. Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 11, 13, 42–48. On Lindsay's reception by gay activist groups, see Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 217–23.

[26] "Hoving Calls a Meeting."

[27] Robert C. Doty, "Growth of Overt Homosexuality in City Provokes Wide Concern," *New York Times*, 17 Dec. 1963, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1963/12/17/89990450.html?pageNumber=1 (accessed 1 Dec. 2016).

[28] Tony Smith, quoted in Wagstaff, Jr., *Tony Smith*, unpaginated.

[29] Lindsay, *Parks and Recreation*, 4.

[30] Thomas Hoving to Samuel J. Wagstaff, Jr., 2 Dec. 1966.

[31] Press Release, 21 Feb. 1967, Department of Parks, City of New York. Thomas Hoving File, Tony Smith Estate Archives, New York.

[32] For examples of the specifically urban dimensions of the homosexual panic in mid-1960s popular media, see: Doty, "Growth of Overt Homosexuality," and Paul Welch, "The 'Gay' World Takes to the City Streets," *Life*, 26 Jun. 1964: 68–74. See also: Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 11, 13, 42–48; Canaday, *Straight State*, 214–54; and John D'Emilio, "The Homosexual Menace: The Politics of Sexuality in Cold War America," in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Preiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1989), 226–40.

[33] Anne Kumer, "From the Archives: The 1934 Moses Renovation of Bryant Park," *Bryant Park Blog*, 1 Nov. 2010, http://blog.bryantpark.org/2010/11/from-archive-1934-moses-renovation-of.html (accessed 16 May 2017).

[34] Robert Moses, "Mr. Moses Survey's the City's Statues," *New York Times Magazine*, 14 Nov. 1943: 7–9, 42. https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1943/11/14/85134462.html?pageNumber=169 (accessed 10 Feb. 2017); and Robert Moses, "Mr. Moses Survey's the City's Statues, Part II," *New York Times Magazine*, 21 Nov. 1943: 18–19, 31. https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1943/11/21/83953358.html?pageNumber=183 (accessed 10 Feb. 2017).

[35] Harriet F. Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 108.

[36] Hilton Kramer, "A Sculpture Show in Bryant Park," *New York Times*, 2 Feb. 1967, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/02/02/83022748.html?pageNumber=32 (accessed 5 Nov. 2015); Grace Glueck, "Bringing Back Beardsley," *New York Times*, 19 Feb. 1967, http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/02/19/83576008.html?pageNumber=115 (accessed 5 Nov. 2015); and Michael Benedikt, "New York Letter: Tony Smith," *Art International* 11.4 (20 Apr. 1967): 63–64.

[37] Glueck, "Bringing Back Beardsley."

[38] "Master of the Monumentalists," 84.

[39] Harold Rosenberg, "Defining Art," *New Yorker*, 25 Feb. 1967: 109.

[40] Kramer, "Sculpture Show."

[41] Michael Benedikt, "Sculpture as Architecture: New York Letter, 1966–67," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battock, California Paperback Edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 89.

[42] Mark W. Turner, *Backwards Glances: Cruising the Queer Streets of New York and London* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), 9, 57—60, 122.

[43] Ibid., 60.

[44] Scott Burton, "Tony Smith and Minimalist Sculpture," lecture at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 10 Oct. 1967, in *Scott Burton: Collected Writings on Art and Performance, 1965–1975*, ed. David J. Getsy (Chicago, IL: Sobercove Press, 2012), 58.

[45] Ibid., 63.

[46] Tony Smith, interview conducted by Renée Sabatello Neu for the Museum of Modern Art, 25 Jul. 1968, Renée S. Neu file, Tony Smith Estate Archives, New York; "Presences in the Park," *Time*, 10 Feb. 1967: 74; and Robert Storr, "A Man of Parts," in *Tony Smith: Architect, Painter, Sculptor* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 19, 25, 28.

[47] Quoted in Peter Wolf, "The Urban Street," *Art in America* 58.6 (1970): 118.

[48] Cecile Abish, Carl Andre, Beverly Pepper and Tony Smith, "Statements by Sculptors," *Art Journal* 35.2 (Winter 1975–76): 129.

[49] The conference was organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis Downtown Council, and Minneapolis Planning and Development Department. Ronald Tulis to Tony Smith, 16 Feb. 1970, *Project for a Parking Lot* folder, Tony Smith Estate Archives, New York.

[50] Lynch, *Image of the City*, 9–10, 39–40, 61–62, 105–6, 109–10, 118–20.

[51] Tony Smith, transcript of conference proceedings, "Hennepin: The Future of an Avenue: Two Open Forums," 24 Apr. 1970, Reel 1A-B, 14-5, *Project for a Parking Lot* folder, Tony Smith Estate Archives, New York. See also Charles Whiting, "Sculptor Suggests 'Defined' Endings for Theater Area," *Minneapolis Star*, 15 Apr. 1970: 12C; and Lucy Lippard, "The New Work: More Points on the Lattice, An Interview with Tony Smith," in *Tony Smith: Recent Sculpture* (New York: M. Knoedler & Co., 1971), 16.

[52] Smith, "Hennepin," Reel 1A-B, 14–15.

[53] Ibid., 16–17. See also: Tony Smith, "Art of the Sixties: The Walls Come Tumbling Down," *Eye on Art* CBS, 1968, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v = rqsNSprAsss (accessed 25 Oct. 2015); Tony Smith, "Project for a Parking Lot," *Design Quarterly* 78/79 (1970): 54–66; and Lippard, "New Work," 10, 15–16.

[54] Smith, "Hennepin," 16–17.

[55] Smith discusses the relational development of these works in numerous places. See: Lucy Lippard, "Tony Smith: Talk About Sculpture," *ARTnews* 70.2 (1971): 68; and Lippard, "New Work," 10–15.

[56] Lippard, "Talk About Sculpture," 68; Smith, "Project for a Parking Lot," 64.

[57] Tony Smith quoted in Lippard, "New Work," 15.

[58] Tony Smith, handwritten notes on plane ticket envelope, c. Apr. 1971, *Project for a Parking Lot* folder, Tony Smith Estate Archives, New York. The conference participants also took a helicopter tour of the city to provide this aerial view.

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