



NATURED
ADAM BERG

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December 19, 2015 – December 10, 2017

Text by Emma Kemp

on view at

AGENSYS

1800 Stewart St., Santa Monica, CA 90404

Represented by Edward Cella Art & Architecture
in Los Angeles, California



Obelisk II, 2015 (left)
Stainless Steel, 84 × 22 × 18 inches

Obelisk I, 2015 (right)
Stainless Steel, 78 × 20 × 22 inches





Natured, 2015
Cast bronze, stainless steel, aluminum.
Sculpture: 24 × 20 × 18 inches,
Column, 30 × 12 × 12 inches









Manifold II, 2012
Cast bronze, stainless
Stainless steel 75 × 52 × 64 inches,



ON ADAM BERG'S *NATURED*

by Emma Kemp

“Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it’s caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But, because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself.”

— (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and Invisible*)

In the first half of the twentieth century, mathematicians constructed topology as a general understanding of space in terms of properties of connectedness and invariance under transformation. In his current installation titled *Natured* at the Agenesys promenade in the Bergamot Station, Adam Berg uses the conceptual language of geometry to probe phenomenological forces of interaction via object-properties that are preserved through deformations, folds, and reflections.

The current installation of 4 sculptural works by Adam Berg at the Bergamot station, Agenesys promenade, is a probing into the invisible folds of what we assume as nature.

Berg’s work titled *Natured* (2015) consists of a hard, pock-marked rock (bronze cast) that appears to have been excavated from deep within the earth’s crust, or else landed here from outer space, and whose process of geological deposition was interrupted, mutated, and radically transformed: the rock gives way to crystalline shards of folded stainless steel mirror, an effect questioning limits and boundaries.

These works are temporal in nature. They are revealed to the viewer through movement, retaining the transient memory of forms and images in the environment which, segmented by the sculptural folds, emerge as a “live” transmission of sensations. In this way they dialog with media screens and news feeds that are continuously updated and yet retain equilibrium. Berg’s work asserts that the nature of sensation constitutes an irreducible experience that is not secondary to nature and/or cultural forms but rather defines—as if through a process of naturing—the very essence of perception of objects that are not outside or inside the world but which shape it. *Natured* is hence a sculptural installation muddling the laws of physics. Though one expects the gravitational heft of these objects to govern the space,

their form instead suggests a liquidity that is both material, visual and perceptual and emerges in time.

Vacillating between the “natural” and artificial, the work assumes its presence as a given nature (natured or *naturata* in the Latin) overriding its reduction to either being fabricated or retrieved from a found environment. It is Spinoza in his *Ethics* who introduced the concept of *Natura Naturata* as designating the immanence of nature as found or given: the modality of naturedness. *Obelisk I* and *Obelisk II*, (2015) are totemic stainless steel pillars that feel extra-terrestrial, pulling both earth and sky into their surface skin. Reflected forms are distorted, presenting altered states and multiple modes of seeing.

Berg’s *Manifold* series is the designative title of a set of stainless steel sculptures in which surface and volume are inseparable. These two intertwined spatial constituents mean that in *Manifolds*, the body is enfolded and reflected as an image; the viewer is engaged in movement around the sculpture, whose surface acts as both a mirror and a recorder of images. Such perceptual challenge is at the heart of mirroring, as the surface is simultaneously turned into a boundary and a limitless expanse. Its skin is both internal and external, both fluid and fixed, and can be described in the words of Merleau-Ponty as “the flesh of the world”, defining a membrane that is equally inside and outside of the “body” sculpture. Whilst some invisible folds are mutable depending on our gaze, some facets of the work remain invisible at each moment or angle of viewing. Via this new Topology, static ideas of “space as a container” are replaced by an understanding of movement-space, of multiplicity, differentiation and (at times, involuntary) inclusion.

Like crystals, origami, fractals, and other forms that oscillate between mathematical and organic orders, Berg’s *Manifolds* rely on equilibrium and self-similarity of structural growth. However, despite being based on sketches and drawings, these works are created by cutting, folding, welding and finally polishing sheets of metal in an extemporized manner. Though their geometric orientation appears automated, they emerge through tactile manipulation and not via computer generated algorithm. In fact, *Manifolds* are the sculptural events of processes of transforming, folding and improving drawings and ideas in metal

plates. A manifold is therefore the visual translation of two-dimensional structures into a three-dimensional volume. Add to this the ever-changing surface of reflection and a fourth-dimension is incorporated: the passage of time. Since *Manifolds*’ oscillate between geometry and organicity, they invoke the tensions between precision and play, order and singularity and convey a sense of concreteness despite being geometrically abstract.

Manifolds can be conjured through:

The specular — at times, a *Manifold* act as the mirror of the surrounding or enfolding the world onto its ‘skin’ engaging our perception with an ongoing illusion of what is mere reflection and what constitutes the actual piece as an object. Such perceptual challenge is at the heart of mirroring as the turning of surface simultaneously into a boundary and an overcoming of boundaries.

The volcanic — the flow (emotion, sensation) from inside resides in the two poles of entropy, low and high, and settles from the magmatic substance into a rock or forms its crystal lattice slowly through long and stable time spans. In works such *Opus 2002* and *Natured*, the intertwining of the volcanic and the crystalline are attained as balancing forces between two arrested material flows.

The meteoric — the ‘thing’ (thought) from outside enters our world and captures our attention. Like a meteor “falling”, or, indeed “arriving” from outer space, *Manifolds*’ are neutral to their surrounding and yet traverse from “outside” into the visual perceptual and physical field.

The monolithic — the epiphany of the monolith as a sign and place, as in Kubrick’s *Space Odyssey* or minimalistic works such as those by John McCracken, are experienced as sculptural forms that manifest their inseparability as sign and place and like a mountain or a sea shore resemble an irreducible phenomenon into sign or into place.

The technological — somewhere between tool and image appear manifolds as utter conditions of visibility, like a drone that evades detection and targets other “sights” or “sites” of images. In *Land Manifolds* (with its two accompanying maps) the actual territory and

its cartographical model intercept within a single object: the map is not the territory. *Manifolds* are both territorial and cartographical at the same time. They, as sculptural objects, are both totems and models, thus being irreducible to a single view, resisting photography as a medium of documentation. Instead their cinematic dimension as “temporal containers” is explored through a video monitor—a screen which acts as a “space within space”, holding time parallel.

As with individual works in this outdoor installation, *Natured* unfolds as a choreography of spatial composition, revealing polymorphous angles and unexpected perspectives. Like a voyage through a distant yet familiar domain, Berg’s sculptures are imminent relics, folding under time’s long arm. They prevail as a mirror of contingent evolution and future archeology, simultaneously recording and transmitting our sense and limits of being human.



Natured II, 2016
Cast bronze, stainless steel
42 x 42 x 57 inches
From *In The Blink of an Eye*, at Edward Cella Art & Architecture, 2016



Opus 2002, 2001

Stainless steel, concrete and stained glass

Permanent sculptural installation at the Naftali Square in Tel Aviv University Campus



Land Manifold, 2010,

Stainless steel and photo etching

Land Manifold, 2010

Stainless steel and photo etching



Endangered Spaces, 2012
Stainless steel and double HD video projections
Santa Monica Museum of Art



Manifold I, 2012
Stainless steel
Photographed in studio



2 Manifolds for Pier Paolo Pasolini, 2014
Stainless steel
Piomonti Arte Contemporanea, Rome



Manifold 5, 2014
Stainless steel, 48 × 32 × 11 inches



Manifold 3, 2013
Stainless steel, 59× 38 × 12 inches
Edward Cella Art and Architecture at the Texas Contemporary Art Fair

ADAM BERG

Born in Tel Aviv, Israel, 1962

EDUCATION

- 2003 PhD, Department of Philosophy, University of Haifa, Israel.
Phenomenalism, Phenomenology and Critiques of Time and Irreversibility: A Comparative Study of Mach, Husserl and Boltzmann.
- 1999 MA, Department of Philosophy, University of Haifa, Israel
- 1998 BA, Department of Philosophy, University of Haifa, Israel
- 1992 University of Toronto, Canada (Philosophy)
- 1990 York University, Toronto, Canada (Philosophy)
- 1988 University of Toronto, Canada (Architecture and Landscape Architecture)
- 1984 Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome, Italy.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 *In the Blink of An Eye*, Edward Cella Art & Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
- Lunch with Heidegger / Supper with Leopardi*, Pio Monti Arte Contemporanea, Rome and Recanti, Italy
- 2015 *Natured*, outdoor sculpture installation at Agensys Promenade, Bergamot Station, Santa Monica, CA
- 2014 *Pier Paolo's Fountain*, Pio Monti Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy
- 2013 *Consensual*, Edward Cella Art+Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
- 2012 *Endangered Spaces*, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA
- Anatomy of Thought*, Museo Arte Plastica and Riccardiana Palazzo Medici, Castiglione Olona, Italy
- Wormholes*, Inga Gallery, Tel-Aviv, Israel
- 2010 *Evidence*, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence, Italy
- Correspondence*, Barbur Gallery, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2009 *On the Treachery of Images*, REDCAT: Aesthetics and Politics Series, Los Angeles, CA
- 2008 Tel Aviv Museum of Art; *Archipelago*, Israel
- 2004 *Opus 2002*, a permanent sculptural installation, Naftali Square, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2001 *Freefall: Four Interactive Video/Sound Installations*, with musician Daniel Meir, Digital Art Lab, Holon, Israel.
- 2000 *L.A. Dive: A Future Archeology*, The Remba Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1999 *Unannounced*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel. A sculptural work commission for the Lola Ebner Sculpture Garden (catalogue).

- 1999 *X - Communication*, Haifa Museum, Israel
- 1998 *Seven Books for Paul Celan*, Passage des Retz, Paris; Harel Gallery, Jaffa, Israel
- 1998 *The Phantasm of Giordano Bruno & Alexandrian Encounters*, Pino Cassagrande Gallery, Rome, Italy
- Video Projection*, Campo dei Fiori, Rome, Italy
- 1997 *Conversations with Giordano Bruno, Alexandrian Encounters*, Genia Schreiber Art Gallery, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 1996 *Interview: Part I, A video installation and web site*, Inter/Access Center for Electronic Media, Toronto, Canada
- 1995 *La Cena del Duca*, Chiostro Vescoville, Palazzo Ducale, Urbania, Italy
- 1994 *Perseus' Hysteria*, Museum of Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 1993 *Il Fantasma di Bruno*, Saletta Paolini Nezzo, Urbino, Italy
- The Heretical Vision of Knowledge*, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Toronto, Canada
- Reflecting Spaces*, four installations, Northrop Frye Building, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
- 1983 *Adam Berg*, Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *Constructions*, Edward Cella Art+ Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
- 2014 *Oltre La Siepe*, Pio Monti Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy
- Omaggio a Giacomo Leopardi*, IDILL'IO Art Contemporanea, Piazza G. Leopardi, Recanti, Italy
- Forms of the Formless*, MoCA Beijing, Beijing, China
- Objects in/of Migration* in Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam
- In-Cognitio*, Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA
- Monster Drawing Rally*, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA
- 2013 *Adam Berg*, Cabana Home, Santa Barbara, CA
- Inner Journeys / Outer Visions*, Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2012 *In-Cognito*, Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA
- 2011 *Some City Angels*, Edward Cella Art + Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
- Souvenirs - Alternate Histories*, King David Tower Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
- The Last Freedom*, Ludwig Museum Koblenz, Koblenz, Germany
- 2009 *Rain of Meteorites*, The Whitechapel Gallery, London, England
- From There to Here*, Barnsdall L.A. Municipal Art Gallery Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA
- 2008 *Omage*, Track 16 Gallery, Santa Monica, CA.
- Self - Portraits and Self - Representation*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2001 *The Odyssey of Art*, Encounters of International Arts – Trieste, Museo Revoltella, Trieste, Italy
- 2000 *Group Show*, Remba Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- Video Art: 4*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel

- 1999 *Domesticated*, Refusalon, San Francisco, CA
- Recital / Re - Site*, Art Focus 3: International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Jerusalem, Israel
- Perseus' Hysteria, Ninty Years of Israeli Art: The Hackmey Collection*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Poetry Lesson*, Refusalon, San Francisco, CA
- 1998 *Interview II: Unfolded Dialogue*, Digitale 1998, Ludwig Museum, Koln, Germany
- Name, Israeli Art: Three Generations*, traveling exhibition, Art Museum of Athens, Athens, Greece; Wiesen Badden, Germany; Brunei Gallery, London
- 1997 *Relatives*, Fourth Sculpture Biennale, Ein Hod, Israel
- 1995 *Perseus' I*, The Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, California
- Inferno Surveyed*, Toronto Photography Workshop (TPW), Toronto, Canada

AWARDS

- 2010 Faculty Research Grant, Otis College of Art and Design
- 2008 The Beller Prize for outstanding PhD dissertation in the history and philosophy of science, Israel Society for History & Philosophy of Science
- 2007 Travel grant from Otis College of Art and Design
- 2002-2004 Two Grants for Academic Research, The Graduate Studies Program, University of Haifa, Israel
- 1999-2003 Full Scholarship, The Graduate Studies Program, University of Haifa, Israel
- 2001 Invited Guest Artist, Arts show and symposium in arts and sciences, Shanghai, China
- 1999 Canada Arts Council, Travel and Exhibition Grant
- 1995-1997 Grants from the Ontario Arts Council, Canada, and from the Canada Council for the Arts
- 1994 Canada Council for the Arts, Travel and Exhibition Grant
- 1979-1982 Materials and Studies Grant from the America - Israel Cultural Foundation



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