

CONTEMPORARY ART, 1965-1990

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. : PRENTICE HALL, 1992

ALAN SARET

by Bruce D. Jurtz

The wire webs and rubber clumps in the art of Alan Saret appear as random and indeterminate as Le Va's felt scatterings, yet more than one art critic has perceived them as having poetic meanings, thus connecting what may appear to be solely formal explorations with metaphorical meaning. Emily Waserman wrote in 1969 that: "23 year old Saret has...been working for over a year with...flimsy materials, creating strangely reticent, though airy, energetic and lyrical webs, clusters, and billows ('sculpture' seems almost too heavy a designation for Saret's work)."

An "Untitled" wire work from 1969 suggests Jackson Pollock as a source, but such an exclusive reading would be overly simplistic. Saret dematerializes sculpture into an airy wire web corresponding to drawn lines, but its impenetrable, space-occupying mass, is decidedly sculptural. Unlike Le Va's felt distribution pieces, a Saret sculpture cannot be walked through. It may be an open form, but it is definitely a sculptural form and not a three-dimensional painting.

Saret's use of gridded materials and his frequent assertion of the horizon link in his work with Minimalism, while the apparent randomness of his organic shapes, their indeterminacy, and their bending of Minimalist ideas link it with Post-Minimalism. Saret's elusive art is difficult to characterize in relation to other Post-Minimalists because it is so personal, unique, and so primarily based on intuition and sensibility.

The art critic Richard Armstrong wrote that: "His (Saret's) work embodies an entropic, antiformal comprehension of art that is common to much of the best work of the generation of sculptors born in the 1940s, from Serra to Benglis. But Saret, in his deliberate turning away from mass, either in reforming it as art (the Earthworks ethos) or from joining it together in unlikely, effective ways (Constructivism, distinguishes both his method and his product."