



Stephen Kaltenbach, *Hall Arch*, blueprint (paper size: 18 x 24 in.), 1967/2007. Edition of 10, signed & numbered. Courtesy Another Year in L.A., Los Angeles

Stephen Kaltenbach, Room Constructions: Blueprints and Models at Another Year in L.A., Los Angeles

Almost legendary for his elusiveness, first-generation conceptual artist Stephen Kaltenbach never really disappeared, he just didn't bother to take more than one turn on the art world dance floor. In the late 1960s and early 1970s he figured in many of the seminal international conceptual shows, as well as the pages of such publications as *Artforum*. When concept art got "old," artists such as Joseph Kosuth and Sol LeWitt maneuvered deftly to stay hot; Kaltenbach, miles from New York (and Europe), just kept doin' stuff, showing it locally, teaching, and getting religion—real religion.

Alive and well, living and working in Davis, California, the genial Kaltenbach is a perfect candidate for revival. He's still coming up with great ideas, and he's still involved with the great ideas he had four

decades ago—ideas that give him, to this day, instant name recognition among the cognoscenti. The display of his early work reminds us how it fills in some important historical gaps.

In his "Room Constructions," designed between 1967 and 1969, Kaltenbach—still in graduate school—developed an architecturally based minimalism so pared down, so elemental, that it began to dematerialize space itself. That is to say, these blueprints, and the couple of actual constructions they led to (at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and New York's Whitney Museum of American Art), took the next step after Tony Smith's room-pushing structures. Instead of departing the enclosed space altogether, as Smithson, Heizer, and other "earth artists" did, Kaltenbach made the architectural elements of the room itself (e.g., floor, walls, ceiling) part of the structure. His interventions, so logical and even elegant in blueprint form, thoroughly distorted the con-

ventions not just of the "white box," but of the "room" in general, producing a disorienting somatic experience for the viewer. The reconfiguration of the room didn't simply render it useless as a space, it turned that space into a sculpture.

This, of course, sounds very much like some of Bruce Nauman's early work. There was decidedly something in the Sacramento Valley air, as Nauman, Kaltenbach, and several other grad students (pretty much all forgotten by now) applied the subversive agreeability that was (and remains) the local Funk ethos to the deadly serious minimal thinking coming out of New York. But Kaltenbach's "Room Constructions" by and large predate all Nauman's acoustic-panel productions. Nauman's, admittedly, are a good deal more peculiar. But, as is especially easy to tell from the several models recently fabricated (not by Kaltenbach, but under his direction) from certain blueprints, Kaltenbach's rooms were also designed not only to undermine one's sense of equilibrium but also of architectural propriety.

Importantly, Kaltenbach created his blueprints as artworks, not just as directions for construction. While they cannot impart the haptic experience of the altered rooms, they do convey the artist's reasoning in a manner simple enough to allow us to project how each proposal might look—or feel. As such, these renderings meditate—even more than do examples like LeWitt's counting sculptures or even Nauman's corridors—between the obdurate facticity of Tony Smith or Donald Judd and the dematerialized discourse of Joseph Kosuth or Lawrence Weiner. They exist, experientially, in the mind *and* in the room.

—Peter Frank

Mike Kelley: Hermaphrodite Drawings at Gagosian Gallery, London

The body, in Kelley's recent drawings, becomes a site for the mingling of various