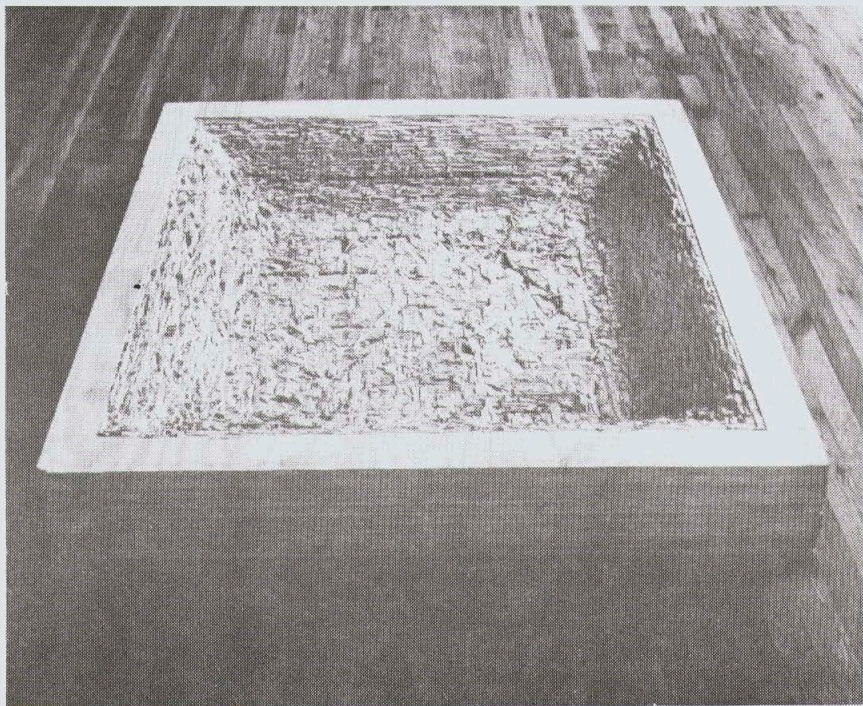


Laminated Plywood, 1973



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...presence doesn't just come from the scale. The pieces have a quietness to them, they have their own energy. You relate to them the way you might relate to a sleeping person, to the potential energy that is manifested in a dormant state. You sense a space much greater than the volume actually used up.

Jackie Winsor, in conversation with Ellen Phelan, 1976.

The sculptures of Jackie Winsor affirmatively assert the role of the artist as object-maker. In a decade when many of our most distinguished sculptors have explored the problem of integrating sculpture with site, Winsor has emerged as an independent spirit who has fused certain contemporary issues with traditional viabilities.

To be sure Winsor draws selectively from the vocabulary of minimalism. Geometric forms, symmetry and classical restraint, for instance, are essential aspects of her work. However, by the early 1970s it was evident that Winsor's stern eccentricities were offering one intelligent alternative to prevailing reductivist tendencies.

Consistent in Winsor's work has been an interest in density, weight and balance. Winsor made a number of early pieces out of hemp. She was intrigued with the "repeated linearity of hundreds of threads". It is in these early rope pieces that Winsor seems to have become alert to the possibilities of combining small-scale units (threads, nails, strips of wooden lath, etc.) in quantities sufficient to build large forms.

Double Column (1970), an early transitional work, is an example of Winsor's use of rope. The interior vertical steel rods which reinforce the rope are, however, atypical of

Winsor's mature style. This kind of hidden contrivance plays no part in Winsor's other pieces. When Winsor returns to tall vertical works a couple of years later, the concealed steel rods are replaced by exposed logs and the works are not bolted into the floor but leaned against the wall. The artist is working with not against the pull of gravity.

Solid Lattice (1970) embodies many ingredients now familiar to Winsor's work. Proportions are scaled down. Understatement results in a compact, insistent presence which draws our attention. Density is achieved via an additive process as strips of wood lath are nailed one to the next. The deliberateness and the repetitiveness ascribed to this labor recur in most of Winsor's work.

In Nail Piece (1970) Winsor moves a giant step beyond serious workman-like attention to detail when she vents a compulsive, almost fetishistic obsession with her own energetic capacities. The result is an excess of materials, an excess of industry and a work of remarkable power. The artist describes the process: "It took me a couple of months to nail all the nails in...It seemed like forever. I nailed two lengths of wood on one side, flipped them over and then hammered on the other side, and so on until it was about the right thickness. I wanted the wood to be solid with nails ...to compress the planks of wood so tightly and so densely as to almost make it one piece of wood; but mostly I was interested in a feeling of concealed energy. I like the fact that each layer has tons of nails in it that can't be seen. The only way you can have a sense of 50 pounds of nails in the piece is if you try to pick it up." (Avalanche, Spring '72).

For Winsor the process of making a piece becomes an important ritual. The excruciating time invested in Nail Piece and other pieces by Winsor -- called "slow time" by the artist -- becomes integral to our comprehension of her work. Winsor's willingness to embrace difficulties and push endurance, her willingness to acknowledge her studio as an arena of tense and deliberate struggle mark a continuity between her approach to art-making and the traditional role of the artist in the West.

Winsor achieves the quintessential expression of density with her 18" diameter Solid Cement Sphere (1971). This work is so straight-forward, incisive and direct a statement that it renders critical comment superfluous.

Laminated Plywood (1973) is a many layered stack of 48" square pieces of plywood laminated to a height of 7½". Once Winsor has carefully built up the form she then aggressively gouges out the entire center area. Here the repetitive gestures are subtractive. This opening up of the center area is found in a number of Winsor's pieces from Small Circle (1969) to several recent standing cubes (1974-76). In each instance the viewer is likely to find openness both forbidding and enticing.

Jackie Winsor was born in Newfoundland, Canada in 1941. In 1951 she moved with her family to Cambridge, Massachusetts. She received a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art in 1965 and an MFA from Rutgers University in 1967. Winsor lives in New York City and is represented by the Paula Cooper Gallery.

Works in MATRIX:

Double Column, 1970, hemp and steel, 96" x 18" x 6". Lent by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York City.

Nail Piece, 1970, wood and nails, 7" x 82" x 8". Lent by Charles Carpenter, New Canaan, CT.

Solid Lattice, 1970, solid cylinder fence-wood and nails, 27" x 24" x 22". Lent by Richard Anderson, Greenwich, CT.

Cement Sphere, 1971, cement, 18" diameter. Lent by Keith Sonnier, New York City.

Laminated Plywood, 1973, laminated plywood, 7½" x 48" x 48". Private collection.

Selected one-woman exhibitions:
Douglass College Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ '68; Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax '71; Paula Cooper Gallery, NYC '73, '76; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati '76 (also travelled to Portland Center for Visual Arts and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art).

Selected group exhibitions:
American Federation of Artists (travelling), Soft Sculpture '68; Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC, Sculpture Annual '71, Biennial '73, '77; Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT, 26 Contemporary Women Artists '71; GEDOK, Kunsthhaus, Hamburg, American Women Artists '72; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, OH, Four Young Americans '73; Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris, 8th Biennial of Paris '73; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Painting and Sculpture Today: 1974 '74; Hayward Gallery, London, The Condition of Sculpture '75; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, A View of A Decade '77.
Vancouver Art Gallery, Strata: Nancy Graves, Eva Hesse, Michelle Stuart, Jackie Winsor '77

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Perrault, John. "Jackie Winsor at Paula Cooper," Art in America vol 62 no. 1 (January-February '74), p. 103⁺.
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Lippard, Lucy R. Strata: Nancy Graves, Eva Hesse, Michelle Stuart, Jackie Winsor, Vancouver Art Gallery '77, p. 22⁺.