

JEFFREY BROSK, *Sculpture Now*;

ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 1978 \$3.00 / F.Fr.18 / £2

JEFFREY BROSK is a sculptor (and painter) with an architecture degree, so that an interdisciplinary sense to his first New York show is no surprise. This is not to say that the work is uncritical, rather that it is multivalent.

Of the seven works, two are maquette-like and two are reliefs—models, it seems, for the three architecturelike works. But this is not the case—all the sculptures are formally and materially distinct. In an odd reversal (compelled by the strictures of cost and space) the modellike works employ the actual materials of construction, whereas the full-scale works substitute painted plywood (model material) for cement and steel. (Such "duplication" of materials and of model and finished work is unintentional; still, it must be regarded.)

An "illusionism" of materials, then, makes the work a *representation* of, rather than an index to or an actual piece of architecture; that is, it looks like architecture but materially refers to painting (the plywood is a surface painted to represent concrete and hence, by association, architecture. Sculpture ends up somewhere in between. For example, *Ebbets Field* is an architecturelike structure (the title refers to the old Dodger stadium) which one may

enter or circle; however, its red beams signify lines and its black forms signify two-dimensional panels. So, in the distinction of Hannah Arendt, if one thinks about the meaning, one thinks about architecture, but if one seeks to know the truth, one comes to know about painting. The result of the operations here is that one experiences sculpture.

The duplicity of materials is an ironic pointer to the duplicity of architecture, which professes integrity to material or determination of form by material. It seems that steel is often just a sign of steel, that its function is representational and not structural. This is not to denigrate it; I think it necessary that both architecture and sculpture provide information in two dimensions as well as three, and Brosk agrees: he asks that we see the work as form in space and as design on form.

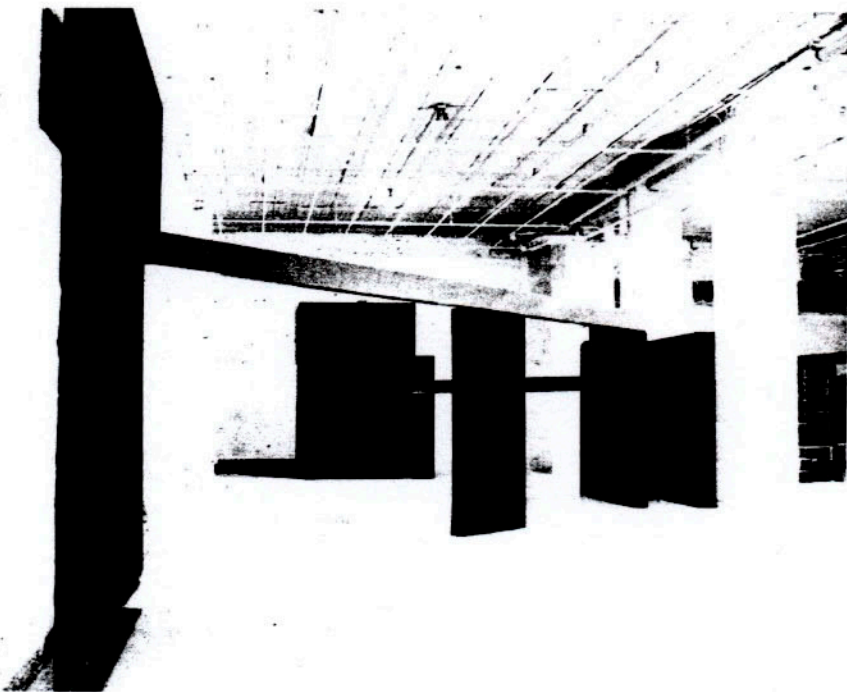
In a cinderblock construction entitled *Down River*, the cinderblocks read as a unit of form but no less as a graphics of construction; there is a mutuality of information and thus of strength. Here as

elsewhere the red beams, materially "false" (especially in relation to the "true" cinderblocks), read as lines and so tend to bind the forms (however oblique the displacements) in a nascent space that is shallow, cubistic. As a result, then, of reduced projection and material illusionism, the work, for all its scale, has no numinous presence. Nor is it anthropomorphic—still, it is human, which is all the more welcome in that it is not facile.

The work is diverse (an environment, a construction, a wall-piece, two maquettes, two reliefs), so that it is difficult to locate a ground, conceptual or physical, except in *restraint*—the gallery not as space but as stricture. The white gallery is open as a visual field but restricted as a physical space, so that the sculpture neither effaces nor asserts itself as such. It maps its own medium.

Somehow, the grand scale of the work in tension with its immateriality, and the openness of the space in tension with its obfuscations, call to mind— clichéd as it may seem—the workings of memory and dreams. These seem to be the only grounds—groundless as they are—that one has here. In both memory and dreams things are made pictorial (though not without a vestige of physicality) and space is distorted (alternately opened and foreshortened). The experience of the show is somewhat like this.

—HAL FOSTER



Jeffrey Owen Brosk, *Ebbets Field*, 1978, wooden model, 12 x 24½ x 66½"