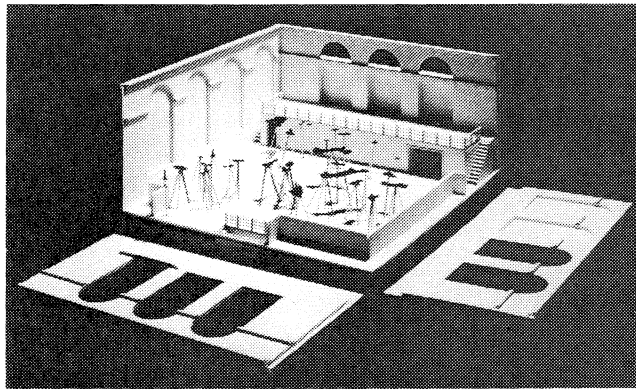


Island Culture: A Sculptural Investigation of Isolation and Containment (Massachusetts College of Art, 1996)

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Islands have always been magic—their “otherness” being a source of intrigue, fantasy, and romance. Frequently the site of events that would not be possible, required, or permitted on the mainland, islands possess an autonomy that has provided inspiration for numerous artists and writers. The Boston Harbor Islands are characterized by all of the above and, while rarely seen, these satellites have been essential to the development of the city.

In museological terms, pedestals are essentially man-made islands, their purpose being to isolate objects in space from the distraction of the surrounding environment. Not incidentally, the pedestal also bestows a cultural status that serves to separate art from the everyday. But while pedestals celebrate culture, islands are often used to put out of sight that which society would prefer to ignore. Again, Boston’s islands are no different and the structures built on them frequently speak to our society’s fears, biases, and desire for control.

Consistent with previous projects by the artist, “Island Culture” brings issues of the natural and built environment into the gallery and translates them into a language that is responsive to the unique characteristics of the space. While based on real history and geography, the essential focus of the project is to suggest that common themes operate at both the art and urban scale. For example, “Island Culture” would seem to confirm two Brancusian notions: 1) that sculpture will find a new standard in the work of the engineer and 2) the pedestal is never a neutral armature.

fig. 2. Island Culture, installation view

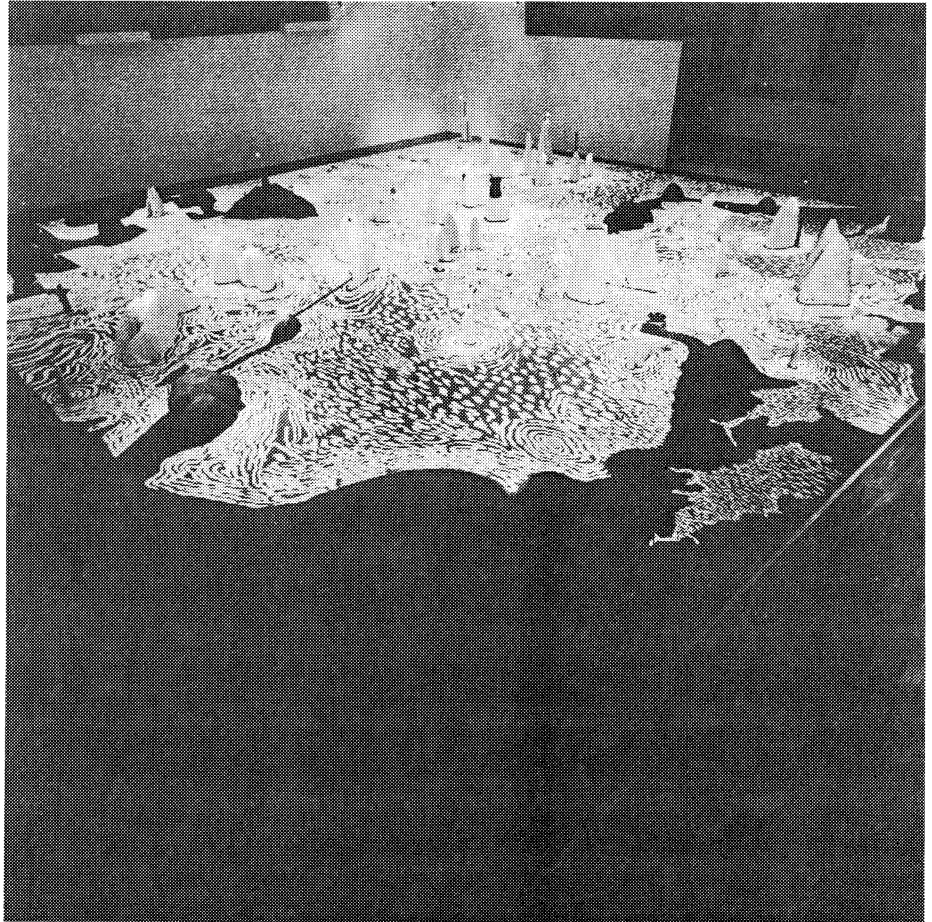


fig. 3. Island Culture, detail view

