

1980s stripe paintings. The push-and-pull effects optically dissolved the hard surface of the block. However, its solidity returned along its edges and corners, where antithetical bands failed to align.

LeWitt's last scribble drawings are emphatically about process. Their roots go back to Leonardo, master of chiaroscuro, and even more to Seurat, in whose drawings the conté medium, varying subtly in density, and playing with the tooth of the paper, manages so magically to convey atmospheric transitions from light to darkness as well as solid form. At PaceWildenstein, the walls served as support for large, mostly square drawings, generally 8 by 8 feet. Once again, they were limited to black and white and the infinitely minute gradations between poles of darkness and light. In places, they gave way to sudden dramatic shifts. Some of the drawings appeared to float in front of the wall, or behind it, as if not anchored to them, which was nice.

Here we were most often looking at vertical or horizontal adjacent zones of varying widths. I cared less for compositions in which the changes from one area to another

were more abrupt. *Wall Drawing #1246*, for example, was divided sharply down the center, creating a vertical diptych, with the wide, short, dark horizontal bands at the top and bottom of the right panel starkly contrasting with their opposites on the left. The result appeared dry and formulaic—though LeWitt did not shun that either. What is admirable in his work is its broad range of visual sensations and attendant feelings, his seemingly endless expanse of ideas and his perseverance in carrying a series through many permutations. LeWitt took risks up to the very end. This is what we want from art.

—Michaël Amy

Keith Sonnier at Castelli

Now that many artists are paying particular attention to the material constitution of the objects

they make, it is both sobering and exhilarating to revisit a few early, major pieces by Keith Sonnier some 40 years after their initial appearance. Fresh from Rutgers, Sonnier turned heads with physically and visually delicate floor- and wall-based works made of antiheroic materials like cheesecloth, plaster and Mylar. He has cited his rural Louisiana upbringing as formative to his outlook, which may also be a response to a northern, urban, industrial esthetic embodied in, for example, Richard Serra's contemporaneous "prop" pieces. Sonnier's work of the time was as much about atmosphere, ephemerality and pictoriality as Serra's was about weight. More than anyone in the genre-bending generation that includes Richard Tuttle and Eva Hesse, Sonnier blurred the distinction between painting and sculpture and laid the groundwork for the interdisciplinary, "pluralistic" model ascendant today.

His work distinguished itself by being wildly tactile, as in *Mustee* (1968-69). A 5-by-7-foot swath of brownish liquid latex brushed vigorously across the wall received a generous dusting of blue-gray flock, as if pollinated. It dried to form a membrane that was peeled downward from its upper edge to its midline—an action that picked up tiny shards of white wall paint. It was delicately tethered to the floor by lengths of string at left and right. The piece reveals the underlying imperative of the studio: move some stuff around and stop when the result intrigues. Here the string may be original, but the latex and flock were necessarily new. Sonnier supervised this installation and maintains that it was no reconstruction of *Mustee* but the work itself. Owing in part to the townhouse architecture of the gallery, this *Mustee* looked less rambunctiously grand, more domesticated than it does in period photographs. But issues of presentation (and, for that matter, provenance) pale in light of the ontological conundrum the artist's claim presents.

Still, it's a great piece. It's alive on the wall. So is *Rat Tail Exercise* (1968), a slithering, skeletal, two-tiered arrangement of horizontals and verticals some 9 feet wide, made of string, latex, rubber and flock. The more-or-less regular subdivisions establish a visual rhythm quite different from the syncopated

intervals seen in old photos of the piece. As did Fred Sandback's, Sonnier's foray into sculpture-as-drawing uses limited material means to whistle up a thing of enormous visual presence.

Hotel Delacourt (1968) is among Sonnier's first works to use neon (and its conspicuous cable and naked, boxy transformer). A trio of fecal smears of autobody filler defiles a diaphanous veil of Dacron behind which the cheesy, sexy blue glow from two neon tubes lazily pulsates. Within a few years, the artist would work extensively with neon, as well as in video and installation, always with a sly, persistently erotic blend of tactility and humor. Artists in thrall to unorthodox or humble materials arranged in unmonumental configurations should scrutinize Sonnier's sleight-of-hand, through which he can conjure a resounding something out of nothing much.

—Stephen Maine

Antony Gormley at Sean Kelly

Antony Gormley has described his sculpture as aiming to "materialize the sensation of the inner space of the body." Though it included just four works, his latest New York show explored a progressively atomized conception of corporeality, moving from representations of the body to a knockout installation that heightened the visitor's aware-

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Keith Sonnier: *Hotel Delacourt*, 1968, neon, Dacron and autobody filler, 7 by 5 by 3 feet; at Castelli.

