

## Robert Mangold

by Tom Collins

Throughout his long artistic and teaching career Robert Mangold has explored the possibilities of three-dimensional expression in wildly diverse forms and conceptions. Beginning with his earliest constructions that made direct reference to the human figure, through his first kinetic sculptures in 1958, to his wind-driven works and a series of I-beam investigations into negative space, to his latest Minimalist abstractions of movement in space, Mangold has imaginatively probed a life-long fascination with time, space and motion, both man-made and from nature.

The roots of kinetic sculpture and constructivism reside, famously, of course, in the works of Naum Gabo and László Moholy-Nagy, and extend to those of Alexander Calder, Yves Tinguely and Bruce Nauman. The genesis of Mangold's kinetic constructivist approach to sculpture, however, likely came in the early 1950's, when he was an undergraduate at Indiana University and studied with sculptor George Rickey who taught there, and with whom Mangold has been linked over the years. Since that time, the artist's most notable kinetic works may well be his free-standing, steel "anemotive" (from the Greek "anemos," meaning "the wind") pieces. These multi-colored and monochrome wind-driven works look and move like nothing so much as totems to science and nature as they physically depict the random actions of the breeze, confined and exposed within the orderly system of his busy, complex constructions.

Mangold's newest series of works, however, represents a radical departure from his literally kinetic "Anemotive" studies and a bold step into the wide territory of abstract Minimalism. Entitled "PTTSAAES" (an acronym for "Point Traveling Through Space At An Erratic Speed") these small and large-scale works of thin, monochrome lengths of steel tubing bent into angular, seemingly random configurations of varying lengths don't actually move, but rather, imply motion. Like speedily drawn lines miraculously manifested in space, or bolts of frozen lightning in red, blue and pewter, the various evocations of a "PTTSAAES" compel our eye to travel along the puzzle of "lines" described. The suggested motion, and its relative "speed," is created by our "mind's eye" which makes for a palpable "virtual kinesis" within the haphazard system.

Mangold's ingenious "PTTSAAES" configurations evoke a myriad of references and sources, from the optical directions provided in the "language" of commercial signage to the Minimalist simplicity and Op-art sensation of Ellsworth Kelly's monochrome, two-dimensional "wall sculpture."

As Mangold himself has noted: "My artistic interest in motion is based upon my knowledge and understanding of macro and microcosmic relationships of time, space, and motion. I am fascinated by nature, the motions of clouds and plants in the air; birds and bugs flying, hopping and crawling; fish swimming, water falling, flowing, freezing, thawing; the sun, moon, planets and stars tied in their dance by kinetic and static energies; and the knowledge of unseen but known motions of microscopic and atomic activities all interrelated in an eternal birth, life, death, and rebirth cycle. . . I incorporate my deep awareness of the simple nature of complex existence into my understanding of man's efforts and success in controlling nature. The 'PTTSAAES' series of sculpture is my best effort to make a simple non-verbal statement about me-us and all that."



231 Delgado Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 995 0231 PHONE  
(505) 986 0233 FAX

[eightmodern.net](http://eightmodern.net)