

About My Entry in the Ring Show -- *The Light Ring* –

Thirty years ago, I met the 1st Annual National Ring Show when it arrived at the University of Colorado in an old suitcase. The art school at CU was one of the venues to show this exhibition that wore its concept in its name. It was important – national, was going to be a recurring documentation – annual, and was limited in scope to rings. It was stripped down to this one concept – ring – without any haute couture words like design, settings or Tiffany’s. The entries were not commodities but ideas. The participants had given the rings in this suitcase to the show. We, the participants, weren’t asked to name an insurance value.

The real funny part about the show was that it was an embodiment of the cutting edge of American art. The art world was dematerializing and deconstructing tradition, and ‘ring’ had so many historical connotations to invoke and interrogate in art: marriage, intimacy, loyalty, wealth, preciousness, royalty, power, craftsmanship, sensuousness.

This was my challenge in 1977. In the spirit of the show and its obvious disinterest in insurance-valued jewelry, I made the first ring out of snow – a precious commodity in Colorado – so the ring would be transformed before anyone else had the chance to try it on, and would have to reinvent the ring in his or her mind – project it onto skin and sense the cold – to wear the ring. *The Ring of Fire*, in the second ring show, should still be able to make an uncomfortable projection and I can still visualize the blister on my finger.

The Light Ring is also about projecting an idea onto your body. The ring itself is a physical projection of light onto the skin, and is also the mental projection that exists in the do-it-yourself templates.

Creating a situation that invites participation is one way I am trying to convey experience. And, experience for the viewer is the aim of my work. Each experience of an artwork is personal, whether or not we snap a picture of ourselves at the moment and send it from the camera phone to all our friends, or, the other extreme, where we allow the experience to reside within us.

Most of my current work creates an environment: a loosely guided tour of snow forms, an intervention with an existing sculpture or natural landscape and steel sculptures and their shadows that materialize the illusion of two and three-dimensional artwork. To convey experience requires that I chose the appropriate scale and format for each concept I’m trying to project. For the *Light Ring* the photographs needed to be more intimate – a size to fit in a jewel case.

I’ve not made a new ring for several years -- I’m making steel sculpture or doing “land art” – so I really appreciated this opportunity to try to make something in the original spirit of the ring show – art on the diamond-honed edge of art.

-- Stuart Bremner, Denver, Colorado