

# Robert Irwin

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## 1928, Born in Long Beach, CA

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Robert Irwin has been one of the pivotal artists in American Art for more than 46 years both as a practitioner, a theoretician, and a teacher. Irwin began his career as an abstract expressionist; however, by the late 1960s he had moved away from painting to become one of the creators of the art of light and space, using ephemeral materials such as scrim, lighting and orientation to alter and heighten the viewers' perception of the space in which they encountered his work. Since the early 80s Irwin has won an international reputation for his "site-generated" works in public spaces, which often make intimate use of site conditions, architecture, natural elements, plantings and topographic features.

Robert Irwin was born in 1928 and grew up in Los Angeles, where he attended Dorsey High School. He received his art education at Otis Art Institute, Jepsons Art Institute and Chouinards Art Institute (1948-1954). Later, Mr. Irwin taught at Chouinards (1957-58), University of California, Los Angeles (1962), and in 1968-69, he developed the graduate program at the University of California, Irvine, working with a number of now successful artists such as Ed Ruscha, Larry Bell, Vija Celmins, Alexis Smith and Chris Burden among others.

Beginning in 1970 (with the end of his practice as a studio artist), Irwin's method of teaching became exclusively in response, developing a peripatetic form of accepting invitations to lecture or participate in seminars and symposia in the art, architecture, philosophy and perceptual psychology departments of over 150 universities in 48 states. Along the way Robert Irwin has been the John J. Hill professor at the University of Minnesota (1981); the J. Paul Getty lecturer at the University of Southern California (1986); the Cullinan professor at Rice University (1987-88); the Andrew Ritchie lecturer at Yale University (1988); and the Yaseen lecturer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1990); and the Kiley lecturer at Harvard University (2001).

In the early years following art school (1958-68) Irwin practiced as a painter, a period marked by a series of radical reductions in the "highly stylized learned logic of pictorial reality." Today these paintings are in the permanent collections of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago; and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. In 1970 Irwin broke with painting and embarked on an extended inquiry of an art outside the traditional frame and object; working by invitation in existing spaces, Irwin created a series of ephemeral interventions now referred to as the distinctly west coast art of light and space. These works were created in such places as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of

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America Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and The Pace Gallery, New York. A facet of this work continues to be present with more recent installations (1994-95) at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, Paris; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and Dia Center for the Arts, New York. Since the 1980s, Irwin's continued questioning for the "pure subject of art" has carried him to an inquiry of the actual role of art in the light of a radical "modern" art history. This exploration has resulted in "real" world "site-generated-conditional art" proposals and projects in public places such as the Old Post Office Atrium, Washington, D.C.; Stuart Collection, University of California, San Diego; a case study Arts Enrichment Master Plan; Miami International Airport; and his most recent project, the Central Gardens of the new J. Paul Getty Center, Los Angeles, and the architectural design and grounds for Dia Art Foundation's museum, Dia: Beacon in Beacon, New York.

Among the writings and books Mr. Irwin has published are: Robert Irwin Notes Towards A Model (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1977); Being and Circumstance: Notes Toward A Conditional Art (Lapis Press, San Francisco, 1985); The Hidden Structures of Art (The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Rizzoli International Publications, New York, 1993). A biography Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees by Lawrence Weschler was published by the University of California Press in 1982.

Robert Irwin has received the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, several honorary doctorates, a National Endowment for the Arts Grant, and the first artist to receive the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship ("genius") Award along the way.

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## **RICHARD FLEISCHNER**

(b. 1944)

Richard Fleischner was born in New York in 1944. He received a BFA and MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. As a sculptor, painter, installation artist, and furniture maker, Fleischner began working environmentally in the 1960s. His landscapes and large-scale public sculpture emphasize the relationship of man-made architecture and the natural world. The maze, the corridor, the box, and the field are all cultural elements that have figured in Fleischner's work; these elements are utilized in combination with and in contrast to features in the natural environment such as trees, hills, sod, and other plants. Fleischner's environments have been constructed in numerous public and private sites, and his drawings and complex, textured paintings are also widely collected.

Fleischner's awards include the Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts; the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award; three National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships (1974, 1980, 1990); grants from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters; and the Governor's Award for the Arts, Rhode Island (1986). His site-specific installations have included: *Sod Maze*, for the exhibition *Monumenta*, installed at Château-sur-Mer in Newport, Rhode Island (1974); *Floating Square*, installed at *Documenta 6* in Kassel, Germany (1977); and the *La Jolla Project* (begun 1982) in the Stuart Collection, University of California, San Diego in La Jolla. MIT's List Visual Arts Center, designed in 1985 by I.M. Pei, includes public works by Scott Burton, Kenneth Noland, and Richard Fleischner, who designed the plaza.

Richard Fleischner lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island.

### **Selected Solo Exhibitions:**

MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (2006); Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence (2003); Danese Gallery, New York (1999, 2000); David Winton Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island (1995); Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico (1991, 1995); Des Moines Art Center (1992); Philadelphia College of Art, Pennsylvania (1983); University of Rhode Island, Kingston (1983); Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence (1980); University Gallery, University of Massachusetts/Amherst (1977); Hammaraskjold Plaza Sculpture Garden, New York (1976).

### **Selected Group Exhibitions:**

*Specific Objects: The Minimalist Influence*, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California (2004); *Richard Fleischner, Brian Shure, and Judyth van Amringe*, The Chazan Gallery at Wheeler, Providence, Rhode Island (2002); *Cross*

*References: Celebrating the Stuart Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, California (2001); *SPACE—Selections from the Permanent Collection*, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Fine Arts Center, Massachusetts (2001); *About Objects—The RISD Museum*, University of Rhode Island, Providence (2001); *Recent Gifts from The Lannan Foundation*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego California (1999); *Différentes Natures: Visions de l'art contemporain*, La Défense de Paris, Paris, France (traveled, 1993); *Ten Sites: Works, Artists, Years*, Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, Missouri (1991); *Faux Arts: Surface Illusions and Simulated Materials in Recent Art*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California (1987); *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art 1985–86*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1986–88); *Sitings: Alice Aycock, Richard Fleischner, Mary Miss, George Trakas*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art (1986); *Artist as Social Designer*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California (1985); *Artists and Architects: Challenges in Collaboration*, Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Ohio (1985); *Private Works by Public Artists*, Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge (1985); *Land Marks*, The Edith C. Blum Art Institute, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (1984); *Variants: Drawings by Contemporary Sculptors*, Sewall Art Gallery, Rice University, Houston, Texas (1980); *Artists, Gardens and Parks*, Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge (1981); *Arts on the Line*, Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge (1980); *Urban Encounters: Art Architecture Audience*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (1980); *Drawings/Structures: Institute of Contemporary Art*, Boston, Massachusetts (1980); *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade*, 39th Venice Biennale, Italy (1980); *Earthworks: Land Reclamation as Sculpture*, Seattle Art Museum, Washington (1979); Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany (1977).

**Selected Public Collections:**

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island; Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Laumier Sculpture Park and Museum, St. Louis, Missouri; List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; The San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, California; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Stuart Collection, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla; The University of Massachusetts, Amherst; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Lineberger Cancer Center; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

**Selected Writings on the Artist:**

John Beardsley, *Probing the Earth: Contemporary Land Projects* (1977) and *Earthworks and Beyond* (1984); Hugh M.

Davies, Richard Fleischner (1977) and "Richard Fleischner's Sculpture of the Past Decade," *Arts Magazine* (April 1977); Shoichiro Higuchi, "Series 23: Art in New York Today. Richard Fleischner's Yardstick to Measure the World," *Idea* 225 (March 1991); Catherine M. Howett, "Landscape Architecture: Making a Place for Art," *Places* (April 1, 1985); William H. Jordy, *Richard Fleischner: Projects* (1995); Katy Kline, "Space into Place: Richard Fleischner," *Places* (October 1, 1983); Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2004); Lucy R. Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (1983); Ronald Onorato, "Richard Fleischner's Baltimore Project," *Arts* (October 1981); M. Jessica Rowe and Richard Fleischner (interview), *Richard Fleischner: Critical Distance* (1992); Harriet F. Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation and Controversy* (1992); Lois Tarlow, "Alternative Space: Richard Fleischner," *Art New England* (April 1983); Julia Brown Turrell, *Richard Fleischner: Works on Paper* (1995); *Artists and Architects Collaborate: Designing the Wiesner Building* (1985).

Source: [http://knoedlery.com/artists/richard\\_fleischner/biography.html](http://knoedlery.com/artists/richard_fleischner/biography.html)

## George Trakas Biography

Born in 1944 in Quebec, Canada, George Trakas came to New York City in 1963. Trakas is among the leading artists of his generation working in the landscape. Widely acclaimed for numerous projects in North America and Western Europe over the past thirty years, Trakas's installations typically incorporate a functional response to a particular site or environment. Some of Trakas's works include *Berth Haven* (1983) at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Seattle, Washington, and *Isle of View* (1985) at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, which are constructions of minimal forms that emphasize the natural resources of the site. He was recently commissioned by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Percent for Art program to create a major work titled *Shoreline Nature Walkway* for the Newtown Creek Water Pollution Control Plant in Brooklyn, making accessible to the public approximately 1,000 feet of shoreline along Newtown and Whale Creeks. In much of his work, the artist recycles local materials and incorporates them into the finished site, providing a strong sense of the character of the original place.

Source: <http://www.diacenter.org/sites/page/60/1386>

# **Siah Armajani**

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

The Iranian-American artist well known for his public-art projects and sculptures of sociopolitical import, moved to the U.S. in 1960. Since that time, the central recurring message and intended social function of his work has been to reflect upon and celebrate American democratic ideals. With his informed references to rural and vernacular architecture and his numerous tributes to the country's leading poets, philosophers and thinkers, his art has always been infused with optimism about American democracy.

**Source:** <http://www.jirisvestka.com/artist-detail/siah-armajani>