



New Sculpture Arrives at the Parrish

July 24, 2011

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - July 23, 2011 (Saturday; 7:00 p.m.)

Southampton, NY

The concrete sculptures arrived from NYC. They were unloaded, one by one, from three trucks and moved onto the grassy grounds of the Parrish Art Museum.

It took a bit of managing. There are four sculptures. Each piece is 11 feet high. Each weighs 9 tons, said Mel Kendrick.

Kendrick should know. He's the artist who made them.



"jacks" by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal.

Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.

jacks was installed on Wednesday, July 20, at the Parrish Art Museum with the artist on hand to guide the process.

jacks debuted this spring at the Mary Boone Gallery in Chelsea in NYC. The monumental sculptures were exhibited inside the sprawling gallery. They will remain on the grounds of the Parrish Art Museum through December.

(See below for install photos).

The installation is composed of four black-and-white sculptures made from layers of concrete.

The division between the cubed base and the crisscross tops is striking. Surface textures are not as obvious but are integral to the work.

Curved swathes in the concrete create whooshes that conjure a riverbed whose water went missing. Neat rows plowed into the surface occupy other areas. These, and other 3-dimensional markings, become evident after examining the eye-catching striped works that reference the old-fashioned game they are named for.

Knowing the black and the white goes all the way through each sculpture is important, said Kendrick. He prefers to layer instead of using a single pour and applying black and white to the surface afterwards. The complicated method emphasizes the importance Kendrick places on process.

The multi-part steps have another advantage—it creates texture that would not occur with a single pour, he said. The surface scoring, raised lines, random texturing, striations and nodules are integral to the artworks, Kendrick said.



Each sculpture is a unique piece. Numbered from one to four, motion is implied through changes in the block-like bottoms and in the “jack” that sits atop it.

For instance, the jack sits “straight up” in Number #1 and pivots positions in #2 and #3 until it completes a flip in #4, Kendrick said.

The installation at the Parrish makes the changes from sculpture to sculpture more prominent, Kendrick said. At Mary Boone Gallery, the pieces were staggered. Looking at the gallery’s website images, the artworks seemed to speak to each other across open space created by the sculpture.

The linear arrangement at the Parrish was chosen as a nod to the portrait busts on pedestals that line the other side of the museum running parallel to *jacks*, Kendrick said.

The single line formation also creates a relationship with the building’s architecture. *jacks* is architectural in nature, Kendrick explained. The layers of concrete allude to the way architecture builds up and creates structures.



Brickwork on an
outer wall of the
Parrish Art Museum
in Southampton.

The brickwork in Parrish Museum building exterior echoes striations in the sculpture, he said. *jacks* was strongly influenced by the black-and-white marble used in Italian Gothic churches like the Duomo of Siena, Kendrick said.

There seems to be a simpatico between his muse and the building where the Parrish is housed, he said. “There’s almost an Italian feel to the architecture,” said Kendrick.

The materials dialogue from structure to structure and from natural material to natural material, Kendrick said. The outer walls of the Parrish are clad in weathered brick. The sculptures are made from concrete.

“People don’t think of concrete as being a living material but it is,” Kendrick said. “Concrete is a stone that’s a living stone. When it gets wet, it gets darker. It’s almost like slate. Concrete is very hard. It’s a real material. It has physicality.”

The alternating bands of black and white in *jacks* allude to the way the natural world creates layers of material to form a single entity, Kendrick said. (Think geology).

Reflecting on the artwork’s new home, Kendrick said he was pleased.

"I really like it," he said.



Mel Kendrick beside "jacks" at the Parrish Art Museum.

Here's a peek at what the installation looked like:

The site was prepared the day before the trucks arrived. Four squares were excavated for the bases.



Installing "jacks" by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.

Riggers arrived on Wednesday.



Installing "jacks" by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.

A Hyster was used to lift the four pieces from the three flatbed trucks that brought the artwork from NYC to Southampton.



Installing "jacks" by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.



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Installing “jacks” by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.

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One tricky part was navigating the sculptures through a narrow opening from the back parking lot into the side garden of the Parrish, said Kendrick.

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Installing “jacks” at the Parrish Art Museum. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy Parrish Art Museum.

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The installation took almost a day, or around seven hours, said Mark Segal, Public Relations Manager and Director of Adult Programs for the Parrish Art Museum.

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Installing “jacks” by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.

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jacks can be seen from Parrish grounds and from the sidewalk while peering between the wrought iron fence that separates the property from Jobs Lane.



Installing “jacks” by Mel Kendrick. Photo by Mark Segal. Courtesy of Parrish Art Museum.

BASIC FACTS: *jacks* by Mel Kendrick opened on July 23, 2011 on the grounds of the Parrish Art Museum. The installation remains on view through December. It is presented by the Parrish Art Museum in partnership with the Mary Boone Gallery and the Village of Southampton.

jacks debuted in a solo exhibition at Mary Boone Gallery held from March 26 to April 30, 2011. A second solo exhibition, Mel Kendrick: Works from 1995 to Now, was held concurrently at David Nolan Gallery. Both galleries are located in Chelsea.

Kendrick’s work has been exhibited in museums and galleries nationally and internationally. His work is in collections held by the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Storm King Art Center, Walker Art Center, Yale University Art Gallery and others.

While studying for his M.A. at Hunter College, Kendrick was an art assistant to Dorothea Rockburne. Her art is the current subject of a solo show at Parrish Art Museum. Dorothea Rockburne: In My Mind’s Eye remains on view through August 14.

Kendrick is known for sculptures made from wood, bronze, rubber, paper and now cast concrete, according the Parrish Art Museum. His art reflects “a deep fascination with process, space and geometry.”

Parrish Art Museum: www.parrishart.org

Mary Boone Gallery: www.maryboonegallery.com

Mel Kendrick: www.melkendrick.com