



PHYLLIS MARK EXHIBITION JUNE 15 — JULY 29 1979

After attending the Mid-West Museums Conference last October I visited Fort Wayne and met with Jim Bell, Director of the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, who was then working on his upcoming exhibition schedule. We talked of the hope of doing a few shows of New York artists. Phyllis Mark was one of these. I came to know her work in 1974, when assisting in the preparation of her exhibition in Houston. I responded with great enthusiasm.

I enjoyed curating this exhibition especially as the discussions with the artist helped me to understand her concepts. The nature of the installation grew out of these discussions.

The Phyllis Mark exhibition begins before entering the museum, with the outdoor "Sail Structures", one in front of the museum, the other in front of the Performing Arts Center. Ms Mark has said that she wants her work to take its place in the landscape and be a natural part of peoples daily lives. Art is a very basic need, but if one has not had a chance to study, it takes the familiarity of daily contact to recognize the spice it adds to living. She does not intend her abstract shapes to be directly related to nature, a person, an animal, or even a story, but rather to experiences . . . the movement of dance, the joy of springtime, and the discipline of mathematics.

So one of the most exciting aspects of this exhibit was the chance to explore Ms Mark's concepts and in Fort Wayne we were able to have outdoor work both at the museum and at the Performing Arts Center. Indoor work will be shown at The Lincoln Life Insurance Company building and within the Arts Center at the same time as the more controlled installations in the galleries of the Museum of Art. Here Ms Mark's work creates a paced environment; in one room a bright and lively installation; in another, one full of shadows and contemplative slow movement.

We tend to forget that much of what is placed in museums today once were articles of common usage; objects used in work, lived with, or meant to honor and commemorate. As an artist Ms Mark has always sought to find this daily context for her work. Thus in Fort Wayne her work will be placed in public areas to become a familiar part of the area. She feels that this familiarity is needed to foster a general interest in contemporary art, one that is more likely to lead to thinking of art as enjoyment and satisfaction.

I hope that the viewing public will enjoy this creative endeavour as much as I have.

Jim Conrad
Guest Curator



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THE FORT WAYNE MUSEUM OF ART
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