

From: *Standing Sculpture*, curated by R. Fuchs, J. Gachnang, F. Poli, exhibition catalog (Rivoli-Torino, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, 17 December 1987 - 30 April 1988), Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Torino 1987, p. 76.

Standing in a room

Rudi Fuchs

Paintings on the wall were like windows and sculptures were like people standing in a room. The picture was framed and the sculpture stood on a pedestal. This classic distinction between the two arts is no longer relevant. More than seventy years ago the sculptor Rodchenko made constructions, hanging in a corner, that were light and slender like paintings, and painters, in order to make their work more real, extended their images into space. To attempt, in the twentieth century, a precise definition of sculpture, is futile. The twentieth century is not the age for grand definitions. Our culture is intellectually nervous. Information comes quickly, from all directions, and passes swiftly. Our minds attempt to be mobile. We seem to be more stimulated by change than by permanence. Painting is swifter than sculpture which is almost always heavy. Carl Andre once said that painting is like fencing, whereas the sculptor is like a wrestler. A nomadic age produces mostly moveable objects: thus the course of twentieth century art is defined more by paintings than by sculptures. Even twentieth century architecture looks often light and transparent.

Therefore, to make an exhibition of «standing sculpture» could be interpreted as a polemical act. That, however, was not our intention. We have no wish to be drawn into an argument about the relative merit of the various and exciting art-forms the twentieth century has produced. As usual, our motives were simple and practical. The Castello di Rivoli is now in existence for three years as a museum «in statu nascendi». For most of that period its beautiful rooms were predominantly filled with art-works related to the wall - mostly paintings. To change our own as well as our public's perception of the spaces, we wanted to see the rooms with sculptures - not spatial constructions or «installations» as there are many in the vast and fertile area between classic painting and classic sculpture, but «Standing sculptures». We did not want to see the walls, wall after wall making a room of walls. We wanted to see the high, clear room and the sculpture standing in it. And as it turned out, some of the best post-war artist, among them a few painters, make brilliant and dignified sculpture. They too have not given up the fight for the heavy and consoling object, the fight for low time and permanence.