

The Museum of Modern Art

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PROJECTS: MICHAEL VESSA

PROJECTS: MICHAEL VESSA, the 50th PROJECTS installation at The Museum of Modern Art, opens July 12 and will remain on view through August 22.

Vessa's work engages the fundamental opposition of object and illusion, and the question of which is which. His environmental work created specifically for the Projects galleries combines elements of painting and sculpture and aspects of architecture and industrial construction techniques with a strong emphasis on drawing.

Vessa's environment is composed of translucent, varnished paper stretched over free-standing wooden forms. These are placed opposite, and correspond in shape to, flat areas within puckered paper covering the walls. The installation not only responds to the architecture of the galleries, but also intentionally alters the movement of people through that space. "You can start anywhere," Vessa explains. "Some people see things from the outside and then gradually break it down; and some people see things from the inside and gradually work their way out." Speaking about the scale of the work, he says he is "trying to keep the scale somewhat ambiguous, as to whether it's supposed to be larger than the human figure or smaller, or whether it's to be seen from far back or close up. Ultimately I want someone to make that decision himself."

Michael Vessa was born in Denver in 1948. He received his degree from the Cleveland Institute of Art, where he then taught color theory and drawing for one year. Although Vessa has shown his work in galleries and museums around the world, including such countries as Brazil, Iran, and Germany, this exhibition represents his first one-man installation in any museum.

PROJECTS: MICHAEL VESSA is directed by Alexandra Schwartz, Curatorial Assistant in the Museum's Department of Prints and Illustrated Books.

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