

The Museum of Modern Art

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NO. 31
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROJECTS: REEVA POTOFF

Reeva Potoff's most recent work will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from April 3 through May 21. A large-scale, cardboard and tissue paper structure called Bristol Bluffs was conceived especially for the PROJECTS series. Four scale models, architectural drawings, and a photo montage all related to the large piece will also be shown.

Bristol Bluffs is twelve feet high and thirty-two feet long and expands to a depth of four feet at one end. The piece covers the entire east wall of the East Wing Gallery in which it is installed.

Reeva Potoff has said that her work can best be described as the analysis of a vitalistic experience. That experience is of nature and specifically derives from the artist's response to a particular rock formation, a motif especially rich in potential for the examination of form both on a psychic and formal level. The choice of site is based, as Potoff says, on a "visual, emotional dynamic," on her recognition of a "primary archetypal imagery." Initially, information is gathered, a survey made of the formation, measurements and angles recorded cartographically, and a model on a scale of one inch to one foot is made on the site. This encapsulation, as it were, provides a distancing of "the potent primary experience" that permits its transformation through sculptural means.

Both the medium and scale of the final piece are especially significant in Potoff's work. The term "Mannerism" applied to sculpture encompasses references to art characterized by the use of motifs, and sometimes materials,

in deliberate opposition to their original import and context, and it is within this tradition that we may locate such of Potoff's works as Bristol Bluffs in the present exhibition. A tension and dramatic pressure are created through its monumental scale transferred from nature to an interior space, and is heightened by Potoff's ironic use of cardboard and tissue paper to translate the massive volume of the original rock formation.

Bristol Bluffs represents a considerable elaboration of the artist's means. Prior to the construction of this piece her work was largely mon-imagistic and visually much closer to the rock formation that served as its inspiration. Bristol Bluffs incorporates a multiple, highly associative imagery that departs more radically from its source.

Reeva Potoff was born in 1941 in Waterbury, Connecticut, and has lived in New York since 1965.

The exhibition, the latest in the Museum's continuing series exploring recent developments in contemporary art, has been directed by Carolyn Lanchner, Research Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition program is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency whose funds are recommended by the Governor and appropriated by the State Legislature.

March 1978