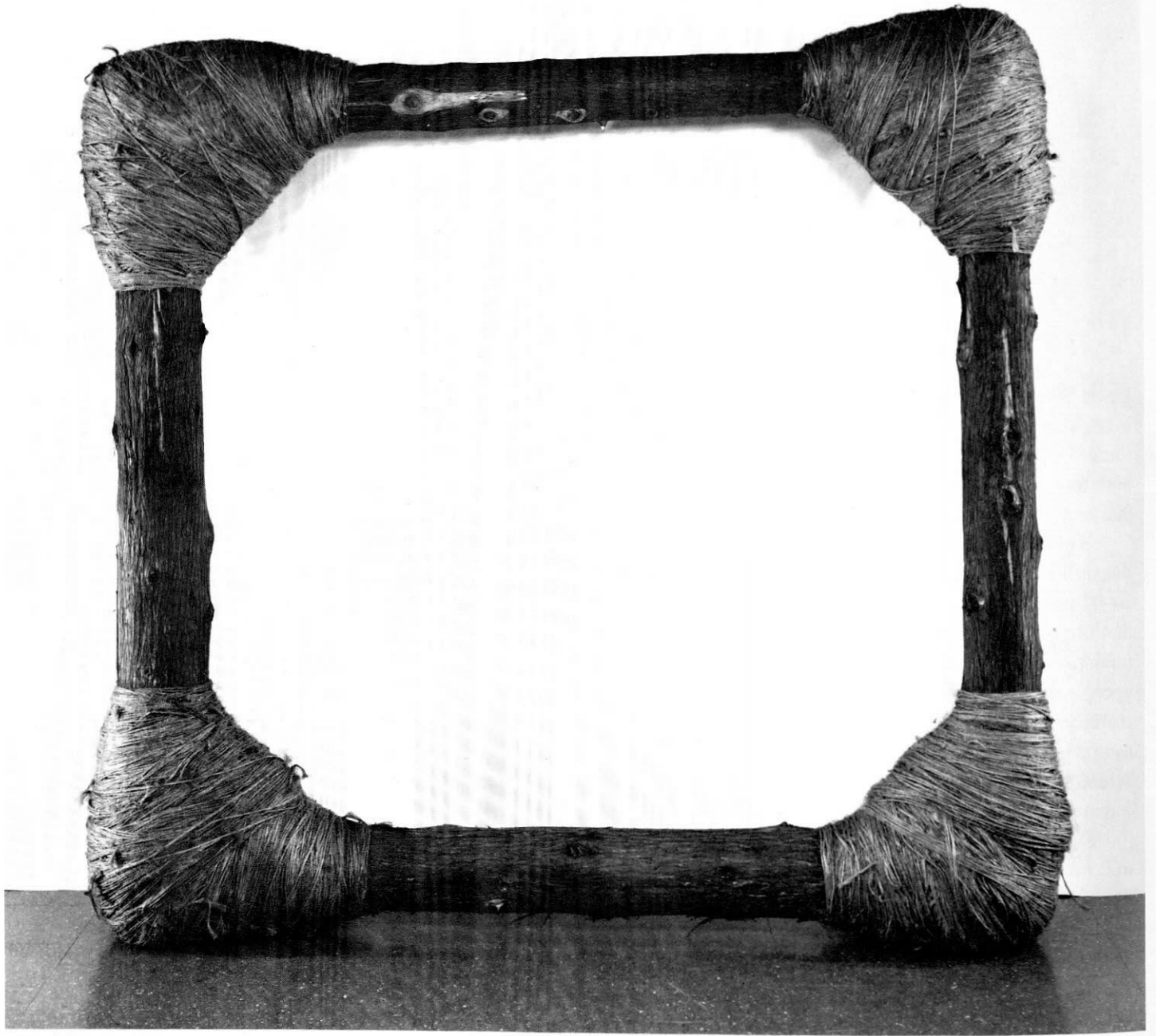


JACKIE WINSOR

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

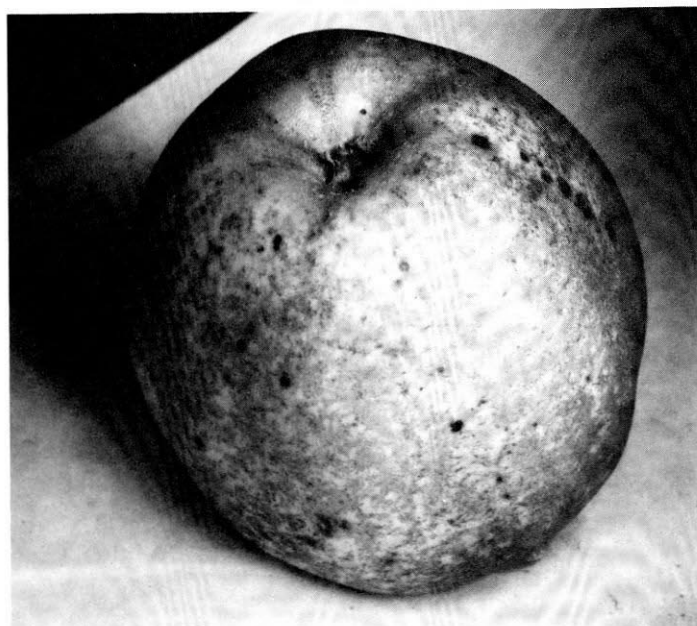


Bound Square, 1972

426.74



Cézanne. *Apples and Oranges*. c. 1899
Musée du Louvre



Steichen. *An Apple, a Boulder, a Mountain*. c. 1921
By permission of Joanne T. Steichen



Four Corners. 1972

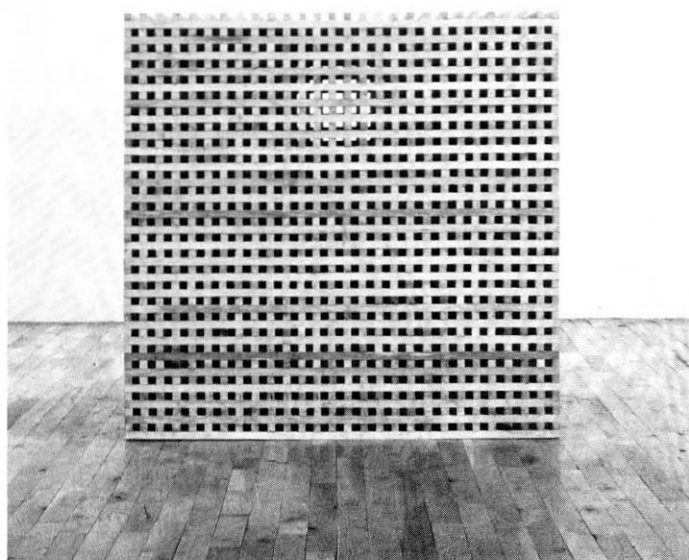
10 1978.601

To include destruction as a part of completion or being whole."³ A further tension operating in much of her work arises from the contradiction between its boldly simplified, decisive forms and the complexity and slow deliberation with which the multiple units are put together. "I can fiddle around for days over a sixteenth of an inch," she remarked recently.

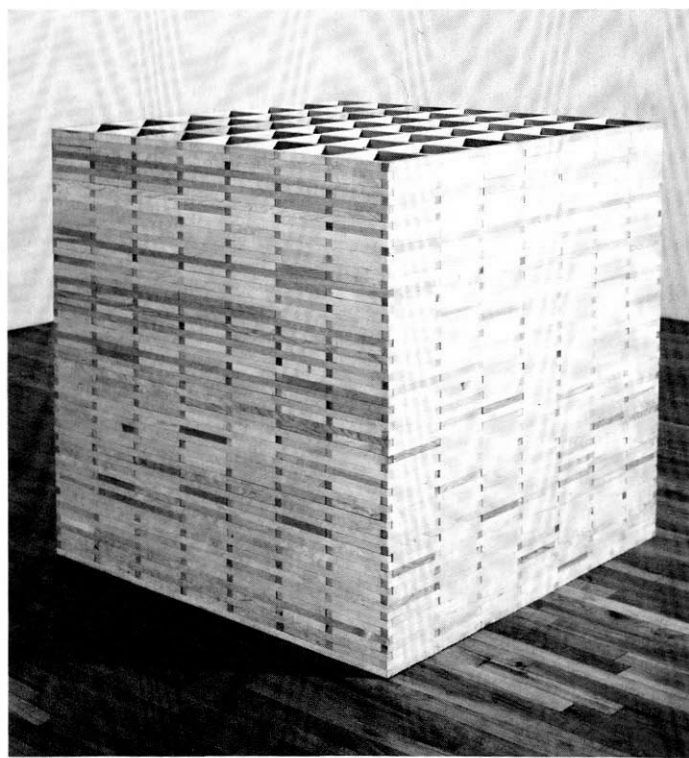
The amount of time that Winsor gives to the physical execution of her sculptures is at odds with the more common contemporary practice of farming the work out to a factory. While obviously the latter practice is just as essential to some sculptors' work as Winsor's homemade procedure is to hers, still the old-fashioned criterion "How long did it take to make it?" may not be so invalid as we are accustomed to contend; and it is quite possible that the energy inherent in Winsor's sculptures may be in ratio to the energy expended in their making.

There is, at least, no question that accumulated time is directly related to the density which Winsor's sculpture possesses. That phenomenon functions here in much the way it does in pinhole photography, where the aperture is stopped down to the smallest possible unit admitting light and the exposure time is increased from the usual fraction of a second to many hours. There is a startling similarity in density, in sober, solid presence, between Steichen's photograph and Cézanne's painting of an apple and Winsor's *Four Corners* sculpture. Steichen's apple is one of a series he made with stops as small as f/128 and exposure time up to thirty-six hours. Vollard tells us that when Cézanne was painting his portrait, after 115 sittings the artist declared, "The front of the shirt is not bad."⁴ Jackie Winsor spent four days a week for six months at work on *Four Corners*, first unraveling the huge old used ropes to turn them back into the more linear element of twine, which she then wrapped and braided around the wood. The whole slow process Winsor likened to a ritual long before that reference became so hackneyed. The earlier, all-rope series she had executed entirely alone, but the bound-log pieces grew too large and heavy for one person to handle (*Four Corners*, for example, weighs fifteen hundred pounds). In the rope pieces Winsor joins hands, as it were, with the original makers and users of the twisted hemp. Such a notion would not, I think, be scoffed at by Winsor inasmuch as she actually invites spectators to bring their own associations to their understanding of her work.⁵

In this respect and many others, beginning with its handmade construction, Winsor's work is steadfastly human. Her natural earth-colored sculpture of fibers, logs, and sticks (even when cut and processed still



Fifty-Fifty. 1975 1978-680



1 x 1 Piece. 1974

pare them, for example, with Sol LeWitt's grid structures). The interior space glimpsed through the small windows in the lath-and-cement cubes is tightly squeezed, minuscule and mysterious, becoming, in Roberta Smith's provocative phrase, "space impacted in material."⁸ However, as I have tried to demonstrate, this enclosed or entrapped space is charged with energy. Such is the case even in the most recent pieces, where she has sought to open up and release the imprisoned space—in one by digging the cement away inside the little round windows as far as the drill would reach, in another by burning the wood laths out of the cement. In a third she superimposes layer after layer of metal mesh on a redwood structure until gradually light is blocked out except for glimmers into the secret center. Her expressed intention remains to open up and enclose at the same time. Of the sheet-rock cube she wrote, "The center of the piece which is in a way nothing (air and light and space) is everything."⁹

Winsor's contradictions and balancing of opposites function on several other levels of form and meaning. She combines reduction and accumulation by constructing simple, monumental, holistic forms through the repetition of multiple units. She juxtaposes austerity and sensuousness; hers is not the kind of sculpture in which one expects to find texture playing such a considerable role as it does until one is reminded that she was first a painter: "I came at it as a painter. You never lose that."¹⁰ While the color as well as texture of her sculpture results directly from material and process, it is her sensibility that selects and controls brown old rope, pale gold hairy twine, pea-green wood from her studio wall, brightly burnished copper, and gray-black charred cement.

In spite of the pronounced constants in Winsor's sculpture from 1970 to 1978, one can detect, within the groups or series, a kind of logical progression as one piece grows out of another. The wrapped-log series began with a two-dimensional emphasis and gradually increased in volume and density. First came the organic, almost anthropomorphic *Bound Grid* leaning against the wall; next the more geometric *Bound Square*, also resting on the wall like a picture; then followed the totally free-standing and solidly sculptural *Four Corners*; and finally *Plywood Square*. A comparable progression occurred in the grid-cube series, which began with a shallow square laminated box, on whose top a grid pattern was chiseled out like a drawing. However, in the fully volumetric grid-cubes (*Fifty-Fifty*, *1 x 1 Piece*, and *55 x 55*) there is no perceptible development; in this case, one solution or disposition appears to have suggested a variant.

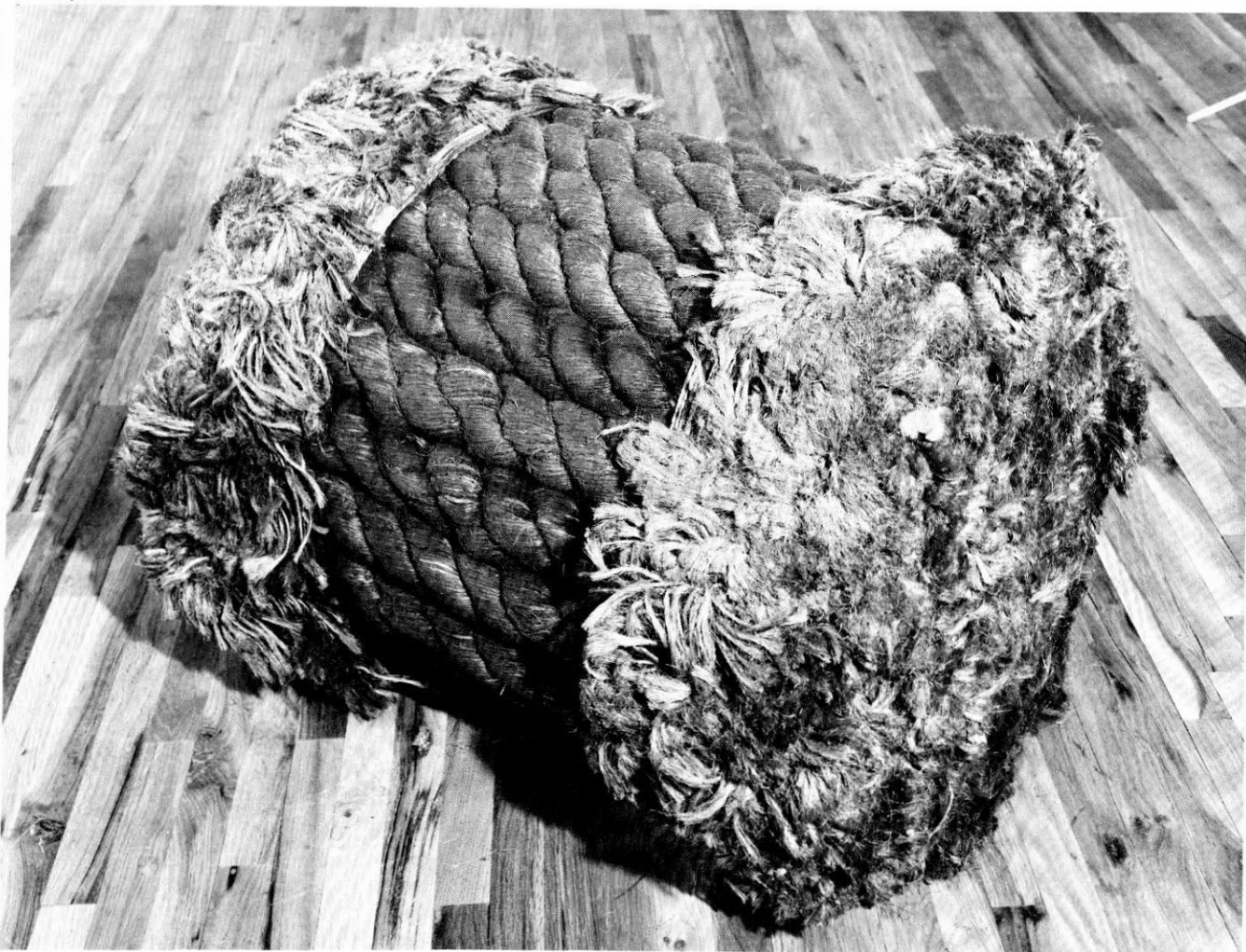


Rope Trick. 1967-68

14 1978.676



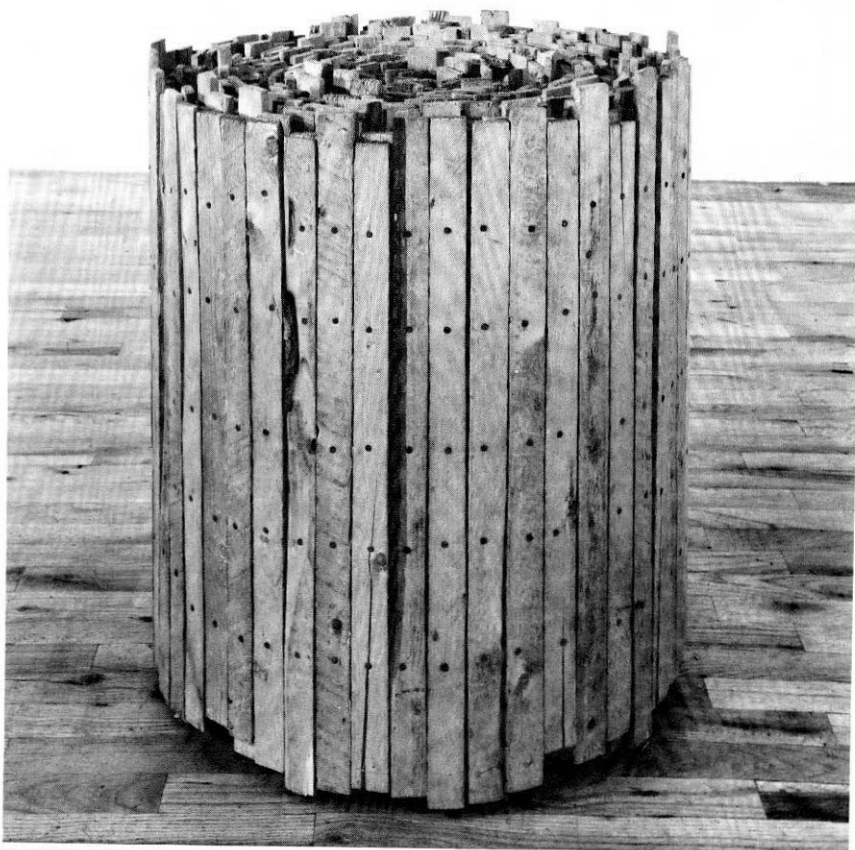
Double Circle, 1970-71
1978.612



Chunk Piece, 1970
1978.611



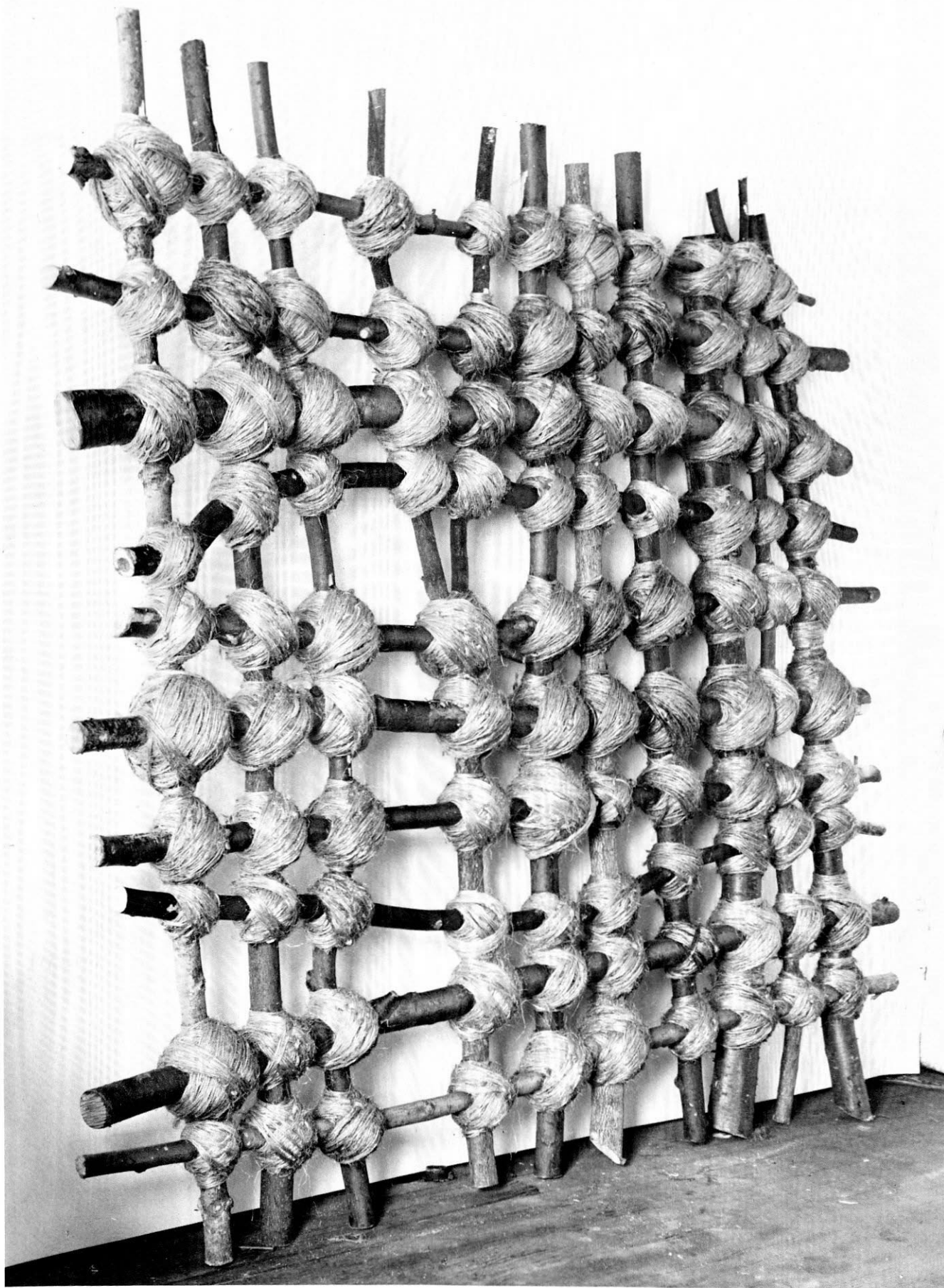
Nail Piece, 1970
1978.618



Solid Lattice, 1970
1978. 670

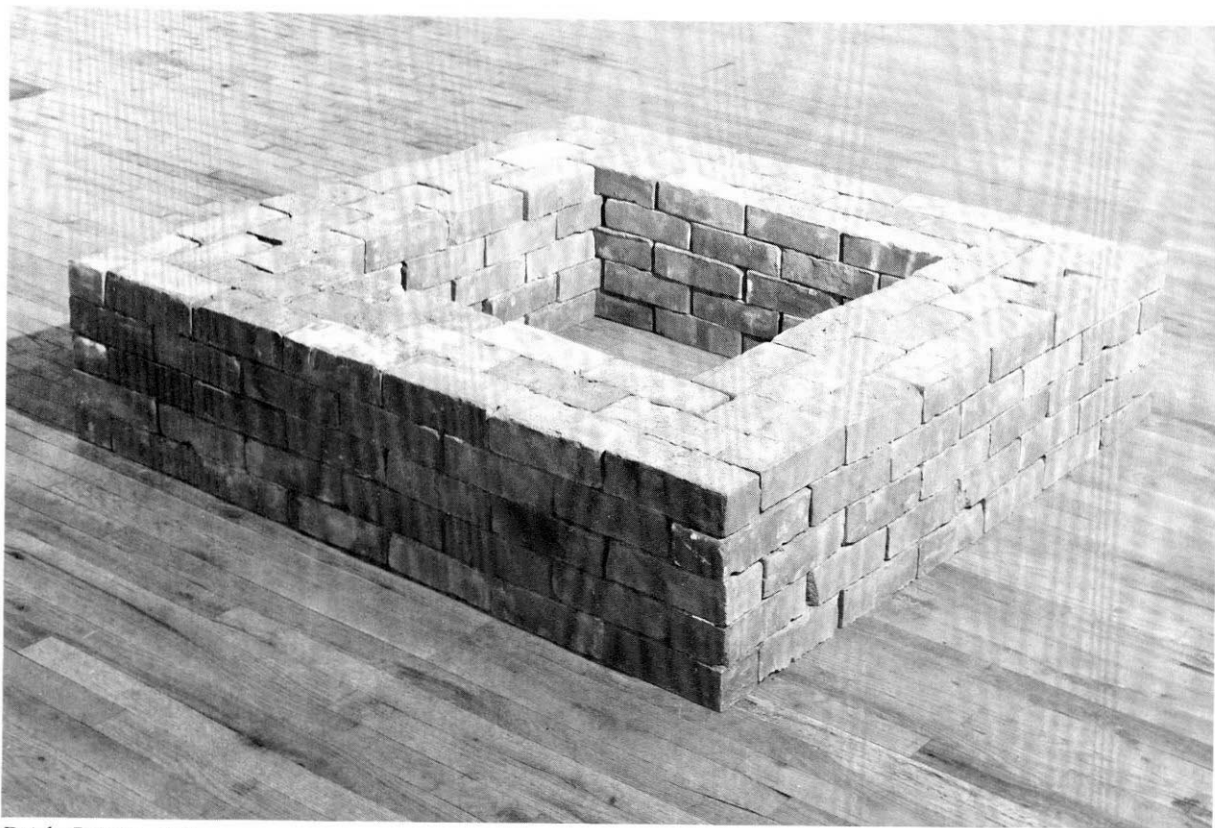


Fence Piece, 1970
1978. 678

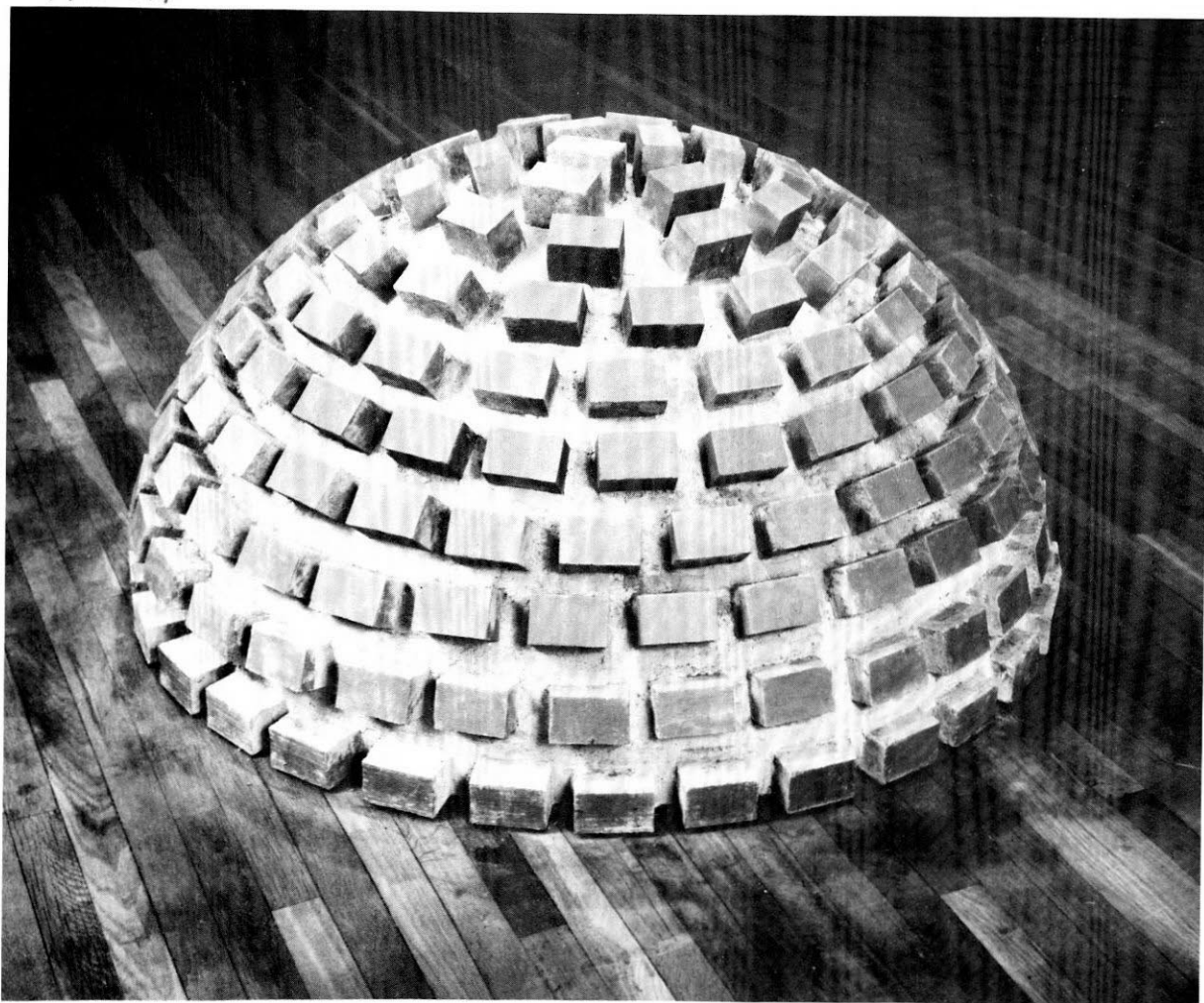


Bound Grid. 1971-72

18 1978.613



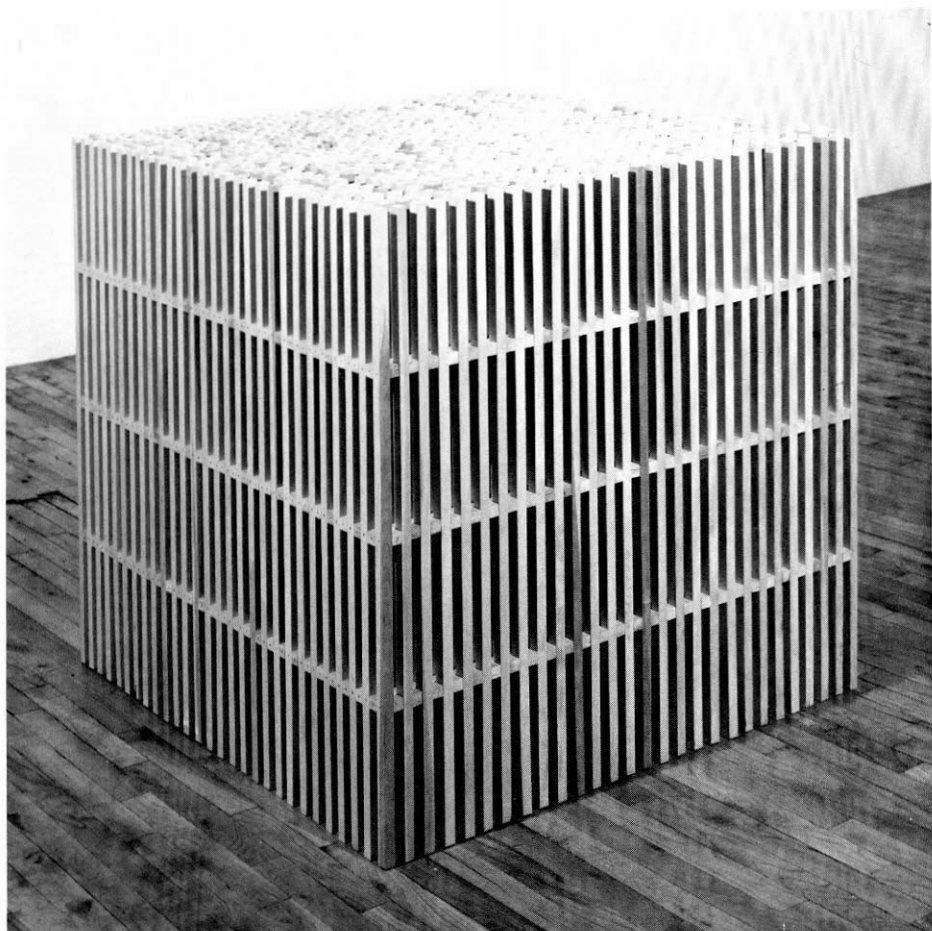
Brick Square. 1971
1978.674



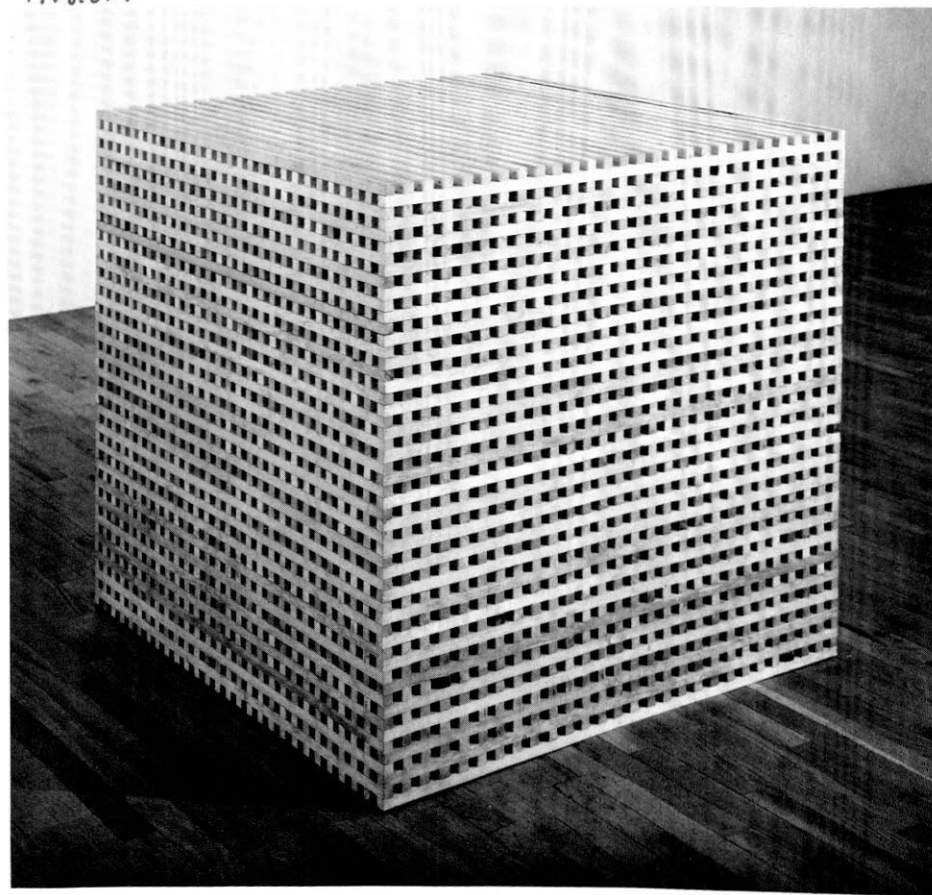
Brick Dome. 1971
1979.1



Four Corners. 1972
1978.601



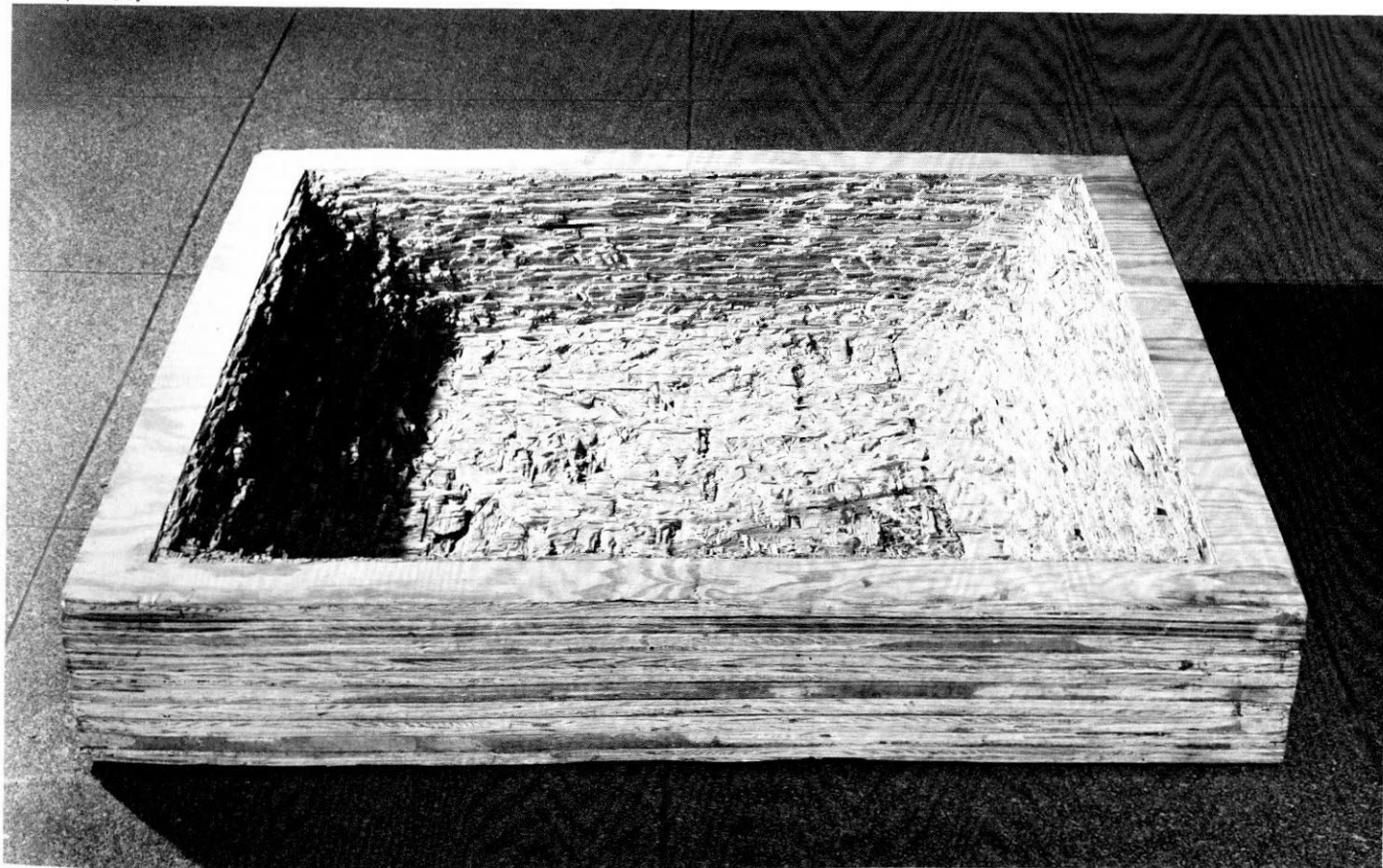
55 x 55. 1975
1978.617



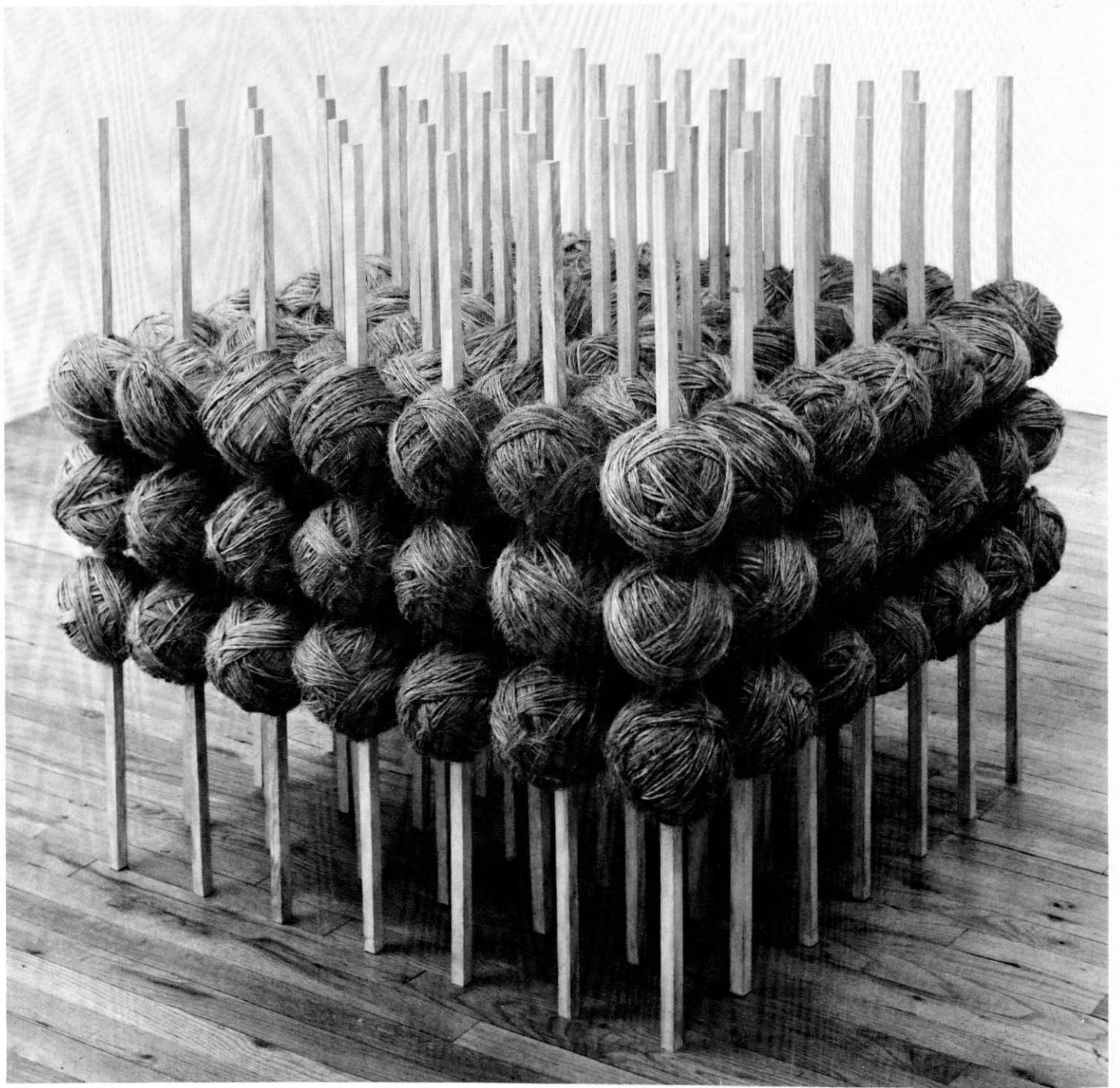
Fifty-Fifty. 1975
1978.680



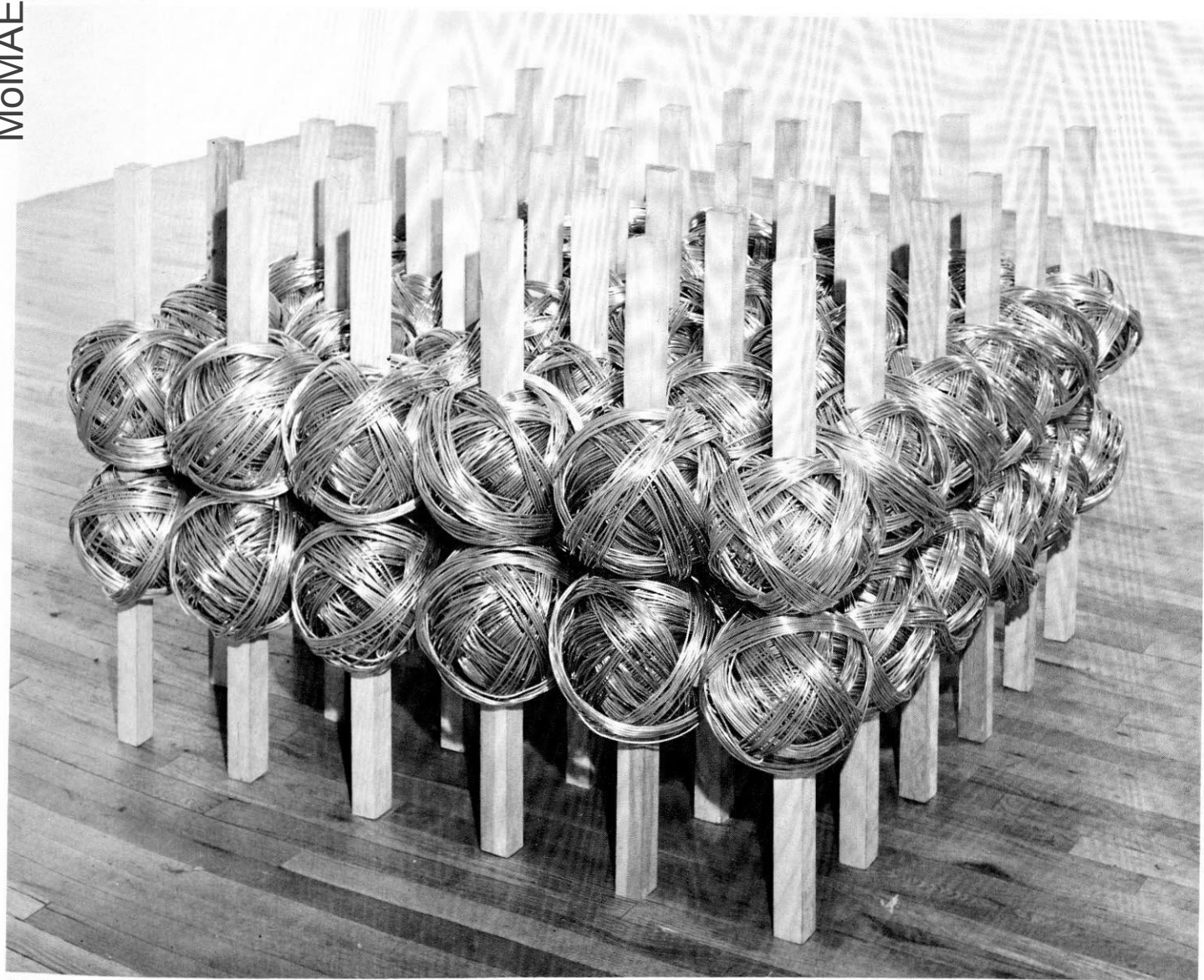
Laminated Grid. 1974
1978.681



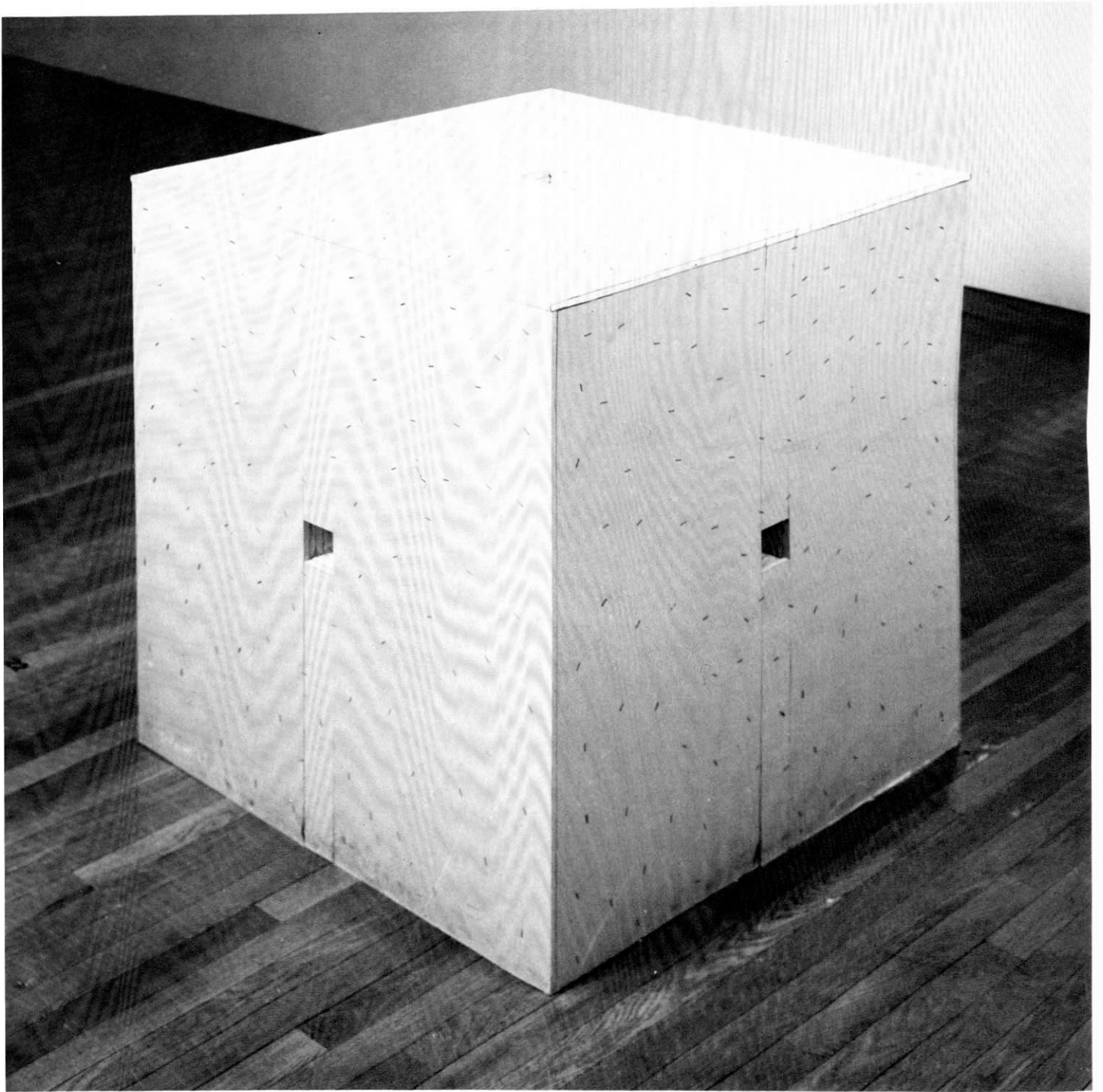
Laminated Plywood. 1973
472.78



#1 Rope. 1976
1978.614

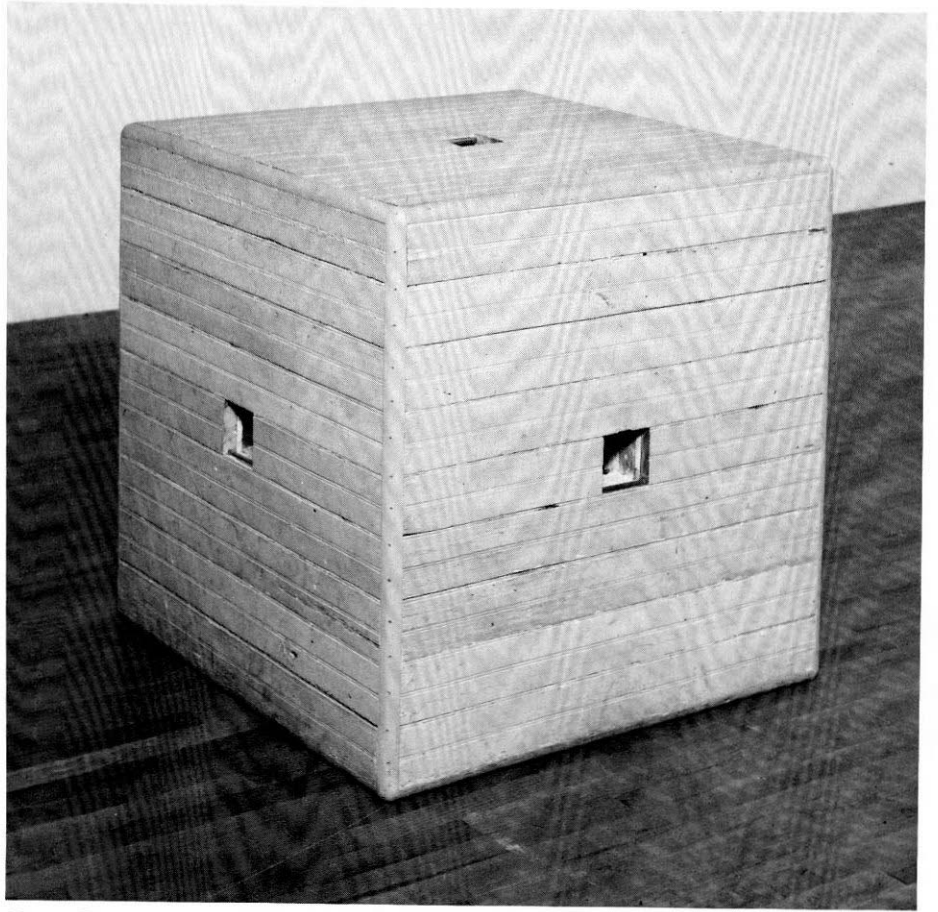


#2 Copper. 1976
1978.669

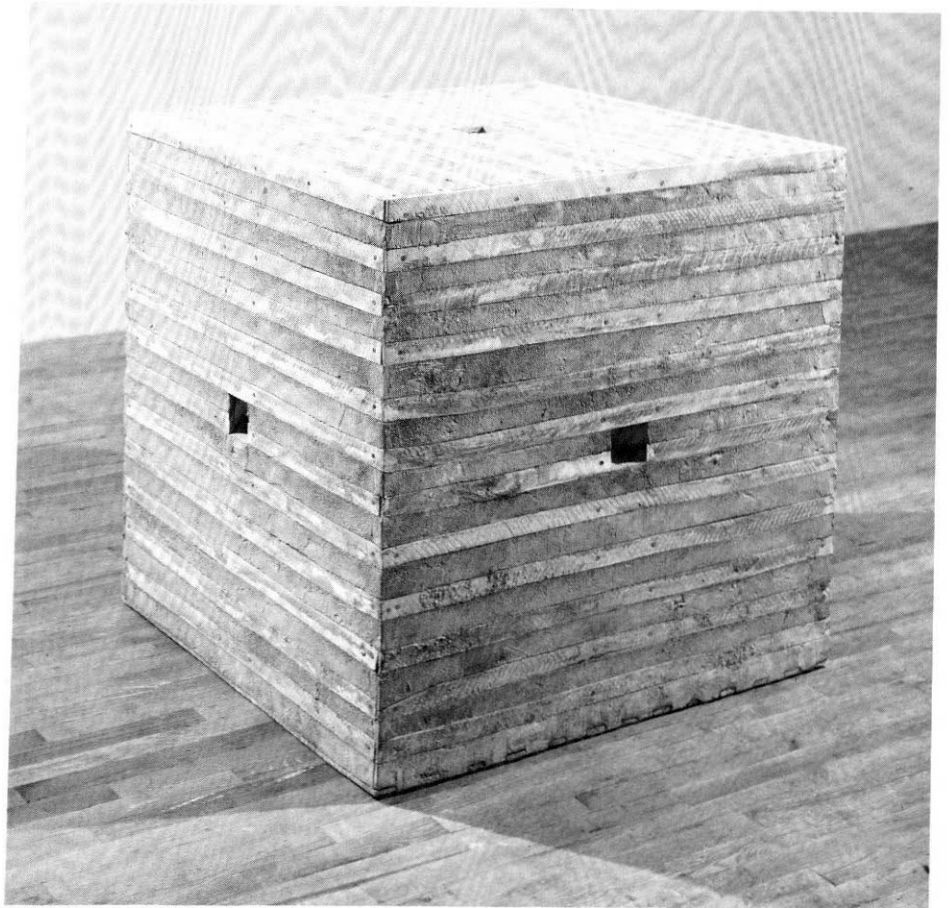


Sheet Rock Piece, 1976

1978.668



Green Piece. 1976-77
1978.673



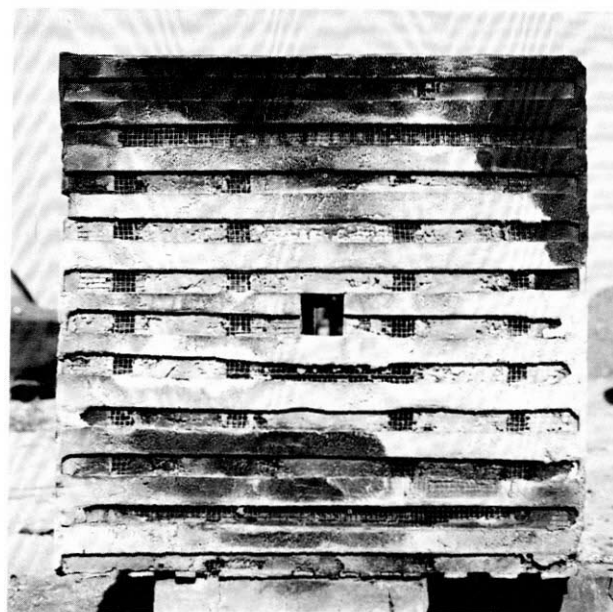
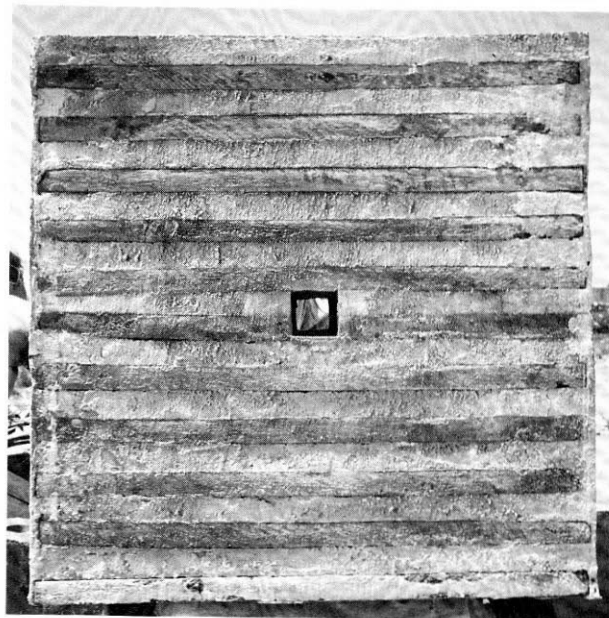
Cement Piece. 1976-77
1978.672

Opposite: Six stages in the construction of *Burnt Piece*. 1977–78
 Right: *Burnt Piece* before, during, and after burning
 1978.677

"To me, one of the main things about my work habits is that I'm very fussy. I want all the details to be exactly right. Somehow they never are all right. There are always mistakes regardless of how much I oversee everything, always things that are not as perfect as I wanted them to be. Initially I conceive of an idea with an image, and this image seems complete and perfect. It is an overview, and an overview has its own kind of perfection. Realizing a piece, however, is on another level. It is about materials, details, imperfection, correction, etc. Because I don't remember or visualize things easily, I choose to construct and reconstruct as a way of working with an idea. So the process of making begins with an image, then becomes constructing the piece in my mind, constantly going over it completely to familiarize myself mentally with that construction from beginning to end, slowing down to imagine every detail, to get a clear, clear picture. Maintaining integrity toward the perfection you envisioned in the beginning is a constant concern. I spend an enormous amount of time just trying to imagine if an eighth of an inch at some point is going to make a major difference in the completed construction of the piece. I figure out what is possible. I go through what the qualities of a material are and, because of the sense I have of them, what actually are the capabilities and limitations of that material.

"In *Burnt Piece* the main unresolved area was what kind of wooden structure would support itself as well as the weight of the cement (1400 lbs.) and also provide for the cement to be one continuous piece after the fire had burned the wood structure out. Somehow the problem didn't lend itself to a very easy solution, and I spent half a year imagining how to do it. I asked a lot of people about mixing fire and cement together, and the main advice I got was: Don't do it! I wanted to, so the image I kept in the back of my mind to guide me was that of a house burning. One thing that interested me about a building was the thickness of walls in relation to the possible size of a fire. I figured out a wood frame that fulfilled all the requirements and was strengthened by the five layers of different-grade mesh that were used to reinforce the six-inch-thick concrete and keep it structurally together during the firing. A second big concern was with stressing the cement with fire. Cement is not like ceramic clay that cures with firing. If there was any flaw in the construction, the nature of the cement would cause the piece to explode during burning. Sand, which is usually mixed with cement to make concrete, could have elements in it that might be unstable during firing, so I replaced it with grog, a prefired clay that looks just like sand but can withstand the stress of a lot of heat. Trapped water could also cause stress, so I cured the concrete for a long time, let it dry for three months, and burned the piece on a dry summer day. I had no idea how easily it would burn, since a lot of wood was inside the concrete structure without air to aid its burning. As I expected, little pieces of concrete popped off. The popping was probably caused by bubbles of air trapped in the concrete. The air expanded with the heat and finally, when pressure built up, shot the fragments fifteen feet from the piece.

"This piece more than others was filled with uncertainty. I never knew until the very last minute if it would explode during the firing or crack when cooling, and I was never able to see how the piece would look until the moment of completion."



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

In the listings below, dimensions are given in inches and centimeters, height preceding width preceding depth.

Rope Trick. 1967–68. Hemp with steel rod, (74 x 9 in. diam. (188 x 22.8 cm.)) Collection of the artist. Ill. p. 14

$73\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ diam. (187.8 x 24.1 cm.)
Chunk Piece. 1970. Hemp, (36 x 28 in. diam. (91.5 x 71.1 cm.))
 Collection Albert Alhadeff and Michèle Amateau, Boulder and Crested Butte, Colo. Ill. p. 15

$38\frac{3}{4} \times 26\frac{3}{8}$ diam. (98.5 x 67.2 cm.)
Nail Piece. 1970. Wood and nails, (7 x 82 x 8 in. (17.8 x 208.3 x 20.3 cm.)) Collection Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Carpenter, Jr., New Canaan, Conn. In New York showing only. Ill. p. 16

$7\frac{1}{2} \times 7 \times 82\frac{1}{4}$ (19.0 x 17.9 cm. x ~~87~~ 208.9 cm.)
Fence Piece. 1970. Wood and nails, (49 x 49 x 49 in. (124.5 x 124.5 x 124.5 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 17

$49 \times 49\frac{1}{4} \times 49\frac{1}{4}$ (124.7 x 125.3 x 125.2 cm.)
Solid Lattice. 1970. Wood and nails, (27 x 24 x 22 in. (68.6 x 61 x 55.9 cm.)) Private collection. Ill. p. 17

23 diam. x $26\frac{1}{2}$ (58.4 x 67.3 cm.)
Brick Dome. 1971. Bricks and cement, (44 x 52 in. diam. (111.8 x 132.1 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 19

65 diam. x $34\frac{1}{2}$ (165.1 x 87.6 cm.)
Brick Square. 1971. Bricks, 15 x 50 x 50 in. (38.1 x 127 x 127 cm.)
 Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 19

Cement Sphere. 1971. Cement, (18 in. diam.) (45.7 cm.) Collection Keith Sonnier, New York. Frontispiece

15 diam. (38.1 cm.)
Double Circle. 1970–71. Rope, (21 x 54 in. diam. (53.3 x 137.2 cm.))
 Department of Fine Arts, University of Colorado, Boulder. Carnegie Fund Purchase. Ill. p. 15

20×62 diam. (50.8 x 157.5 cm.)
Bound Grid. 1971–72. Wood and twine, (84 x 84 x 8 in. diam. (213.4 x 213.4 x 20.3 cm.)) Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris. Ill. p. 18

$83 \times 94 \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ (210.3 x 238.7 x 23.5 cm.)
Bound Square. 1972. Wood and twine, $75\frac{1}{2} \times 76 \times 14\frac{1}{2}$ in. (191.8 x 193.1 x 36.8 cm.) The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase. Ill. p. 8

Four Corners. 1972. Wood and hemp, (27 x 48 x 48 in. (68.6 x 121.9 x 121.9 cm.)) Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. Gift of Donald Droll in memory of Eva Hesse. In New York showing only. Ill. p. 20

$26\frac{5}{8} \times 49\frac{7}{8} \times 50\frac{5}{8}$ (67.6 x 124.3 x 128.5 cm.)
Laminated Plywood. 1973. Laminated plywood, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 48 \times 48$ in. (19.1 x 121.9 x 121.9 cm.) The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Gilman Foundation in memory of J. Frederic Byers III. Ill. p. 23

Laminated Grid. 1974. Laminated plywood, ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 47\frac{1}{2} \times 47\frac{3}{8}$ in. (21.6 x 120.6 x 121.6 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 23

$8\frac{1}{4} \times 47\frac{3}{8} \times 47\frac{5}{8}$ (21.0 x 121.5 x 12.08 cm.)
 55×55 . 1975. Wood and nails, (40 x 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm.)) Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. National Endowment for the Arts Purchase Grant and gift of Mr. and Mrs. Armand J. Castellani. Ill. p. 22

$39\frac{7}{8} \times 40\frac{1}{8} \times 39\frac{7}{8}$ (101.4 x 101.8 x 101.4 cm.)

Fifty-Fifty. 1975. Wood and nails, (40 x 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm.)) Collection Paula Cooper, New York. Ill. pp. 12, 22

$39\frac{1}{4} \times 39\frac{7}{8} \times 40$ (99.7 x 101.4 x 101.6 cm.)
#1 Rope. 1976. Wood and hemp, (40 x 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm.)) San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Ill. p. 24

$40\frac{5}{8} \times 40\frac{1}{4} \times 41\frac{3}{8}$ (102.6 x 102.4 x 105.2 cm.)
#2 Copper. 1976. Wood and copper, ($34\frac{1}{2} \times 51 \times 51$ in. (87.6 x 129.5 x 129.5 cm.)) HHK Foundation for Contemporary Art, Inc., Milwaukee. Ill. pp. 13, 25, back cover

$34\frac{1}{4} \times 50\frac{5}{8} \times 50\frac{1}{2}$ (87.2 x 128.5 x 128.3 cm.)
Sheet Rock Piece. 1976. Sheet rock and staples, ($33 \times 33 \times 33$ in. (83.8 x 83.8 x 83.8 cm.)) Collection of the artist. In New York showing only. Ill. p. 26

$34\frac{3}{4} \times 34\frac{3}{8} \times 34\frac{5}{8}$ (88.3 x 88.5 x 88.1 cm.)
Green Piece. 1976–77. Painted wood, cement, and nails, ($32\frac{1}{2} \times 32\frac{1}{2} \times 32\frac{1}{2}$ in. (82.5 x 82.5 x 82.5 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. front cover, p. 27

$32\frac{1}{2} \times 32\frac{3}{8} \times 32\frac{1}{2}$ (82.6 x 82.3 x 82.6 cm.)
Cement Piece. 1976–77. Cement, wire, and wood, ($36 \times 36 \times 36$ in. (91.5 x 91.5 x 91.5 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 27

$36 \times 35\frac{7}{8} \times 35\frac{7}{8}$ (91.4 x 91.2 x 91.2 cm.)
Burnt Piece. 1977–78. Concrete, burnt wood, and wire, ($36 \times 36 \times 36$ in. (91.5 x 91.5 x 91.5 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Ill. pp. 28, 29

$34\frac{1}{2} \times 34\frac{1}{8} \times 34\frac{1}{2}$ (87.0 x 86.7 x 87.0 cm.)
Wire Piece. 1978. Wood and wire, ($33 \times 33 \times 33$ in. (83.8 x 83.8 x 83.8 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Not ill.

$33\frac{3}{8} \times 33\frac{5}{8} \times 33\frac{1}{2}$ (84.4 x 85.2 x 85.0 cm.)
Drilled Piece. 1978. Concrete, ($32\frac{1}{2} \times 32\frac{1}{2} \times 32\frac{1}{2}$ in. (82.5 x 82.5 x 82.5 cm.)) Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Not ill.

$31 \times 31 \times 31$ (78.7 x 78.8 x 78.6 cm.)

The following works are illustrated in this catalog but are not included in the exhibition:

30 to 1 Bound Trees. 1971–72. Wood and hemp, 20 x 5 ft. diam. (6.1 x 1.5 m.). (No longer extant.) Ill. p. 11

Plywood Square. 1973. Plywood and hemp, 25 x 53 x 53 in. (63.5 x 134.6 x 134.6 cm.) The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Ill. p. 21

1 x 1 Piece. 1974. Wood and nails, 45 x 45 x 45 in. (114.3 x 114.3 x 114.3 cm.) The Detroit Institute of Arts. Gift of the Friends of Modern Art. Ill. p. 12

Paul Walter's Piece. 1974. Copper wire and creosoted wood, 29 x 32 in. diam. (73.7 x 81.3 cm.) Collection Paul Walter, Princeton, N.J. Ill. p. 11

Diagram for Wrapping #2 Copper. 1976. Colored pencil on paper, 8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm.) Collection of the artist. Ill. p. 13