

The Museum of Modern Art

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FACT SHEET

TITLE VITO ACCONCI: RECENT WORK

DATES February 11 - May 3, 1988

ORGANIZATION Linda Shearer, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art

SPONSORSHIP The exhibition is supported in part by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding has been provided by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Coca-Cola Foundation.

FOCUS Recognized as a major artist of our time, Vito Acconci (b. 1940) is primarily known as a sculptor, though he has worked in a variety of media. A pioneer of performance art, as well as audio/video and site-specific installations, Acconci's impact on the art of the last fifteen years is undeniable. Yet, with its formally elusive nature and frequently subversive content, his work is not widely known. This is the artist's first one-person museum showing in New York.

CONTENT Focusing on work of the last five years, the exhibition includes four major pieces that emphasize the increasingly public nature of Acconci's art. Three of the works are monumental in scale; several models for public sculptures are also shown. These works, which use the forms of architectural structures and furniture, require the interaction of the viewer. Linda Shearer states; "Acconci's is an independent and authoritative voice; his work is characterized by a restless questioning that invariably engages the viewer on a variety of levels. It is this engagement with his audience, combined with a freshness and unpredictability, that gives his best work its unity and impact."

All of Acconci's work stems from his earliest performance pieces of the late sixties, in which the artist's physical presence played a central part. By the mid-seventies he had removed himself from his pieces, stating that his shift was "from a kind of psychological self to a sociological self." The private spaces identified with his work also gave way to public ones. Even today, though his work has become more accessible--taking the form of proposals for parks and playgrounds and actual sculptural objects--it ultimately retains the disorienting and provocative quality of his early work.

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THE ARTIST

Born in 1940 in the Bronx, New York, Vito Acconci received his B.A. degree in 1962 from the Holy Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts, and his M.F.A. in 1964 from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. Over the years he has taught at various schools in the United States and Canada, including the Parsons School of Design, the School of Visual Arts, and Cooper Union, New York; Yale University; the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minnesota.

Since the late sixties, Acconci's work has been represented in numerous individual and group exhibitions in this country and abroad. Other Voices for a Second Sight, one of his first installations, was presented in The Museum of Modern Art's 1974 exhibition EIGHT CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS. Most recently, the retrospective VITO ACCONCI: DOMESTIC TRAPPINGS, which opened in early 1987 at La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California, has traveled to the Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, Purchase; the Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis; and the Aspen Art Museum, Colorado.

Acconci has received grants from the American Academy in Rome (1986), the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1979), the National Endowment for the Arts (1976, 1980, and 1983), and New York State Council on the Arts (1974). He currently lives and works in Brooklyn.

PUBLICATION

Vito Acconci: Recent Work by Linda Shearer. Exhibition history and bibliography. 32 pages. Fully illustrated with 18 black-and-white illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Paperbound, \$7.50.

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