



Above: Noriko Ambe, *Sculpaper*, 2006. Cut paper and wood, 26.5 x 48 x 72 in. Below: Cai Guo-Qiang, *Clear Sky Black Cloud*, 2006. Black smoke shells over the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

individually cut sheets of paper are piled on top of each other; the artist gives them rounded edges, enforcing the feeling that she is describing a natural topography rather than an abstract form. Another aesthetic, different from the one energizing *Crack II*, plays out in *Sculpaper*: there is a tension between the organic nature of the built-up forms and the industrialized, rational feeling of the rectangular platform; the luminescent artificiality of the paper also adds complexity. Ambe's technical skill straddles two kinds of environments—the natural world and the world of the cultivated, or civilized, motif.

Ambe, not content with the relative simplicity of the cut paper by itself, has recently been inserting her environments into flat-file shelves, where they conflict with the steel drawers of the metal cabinets. In *Flat File Globe 3A* (2006), she has filled seven drawers with cut Yupo paper, whose intuitive arrangement contrasts beautifully with the square confines. With the drawers pulled out to different lengths, one can look into each individual environment. Not only is there a fine sensibility at work here, there is also the unexpectedly humorous implication of shelves containing what look like natural

tableaux—valleys and mountains without end, rock strata worn down by water. This recent work signals a further development in Ambe's art, which contrives an inspired merger between various categories, not least natural materials and industrial design.

—Jonathan Goodman

NEW YORK

Cai Guo-Qiang

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Two skewered crocodiles, one transparent and one nontransparent monument, and timed daily gunpowder explosions formed Cai Guo-Qiang's four glorious odes to world events since September 11, 2001. These

works in four different media faced the four traditional Chinese directions, reshaping the green and mortar vistas seen from the Met's Iris and B. Gerald Canter Roof Garden.

The open-mouthed crocodiles—a symbol of regeneration in some Chinese lore—are skewered by a forest of bamboo poles and sharps (brightly colored knives, forks, and scissors confiscated at airport security checkpoints). Titled *Move Along, Nothing to See Here*, they suggest that notions of security have themselves been perverted. "We may have nuclear power that can destroy earth 20 times over, but we're afraid of pocket knives," the artist mused at the opening. The color-filled crocodiles are emblematic of urban legends that profile foreigners and promote fear and paranoia.

Gary Tinterow, Engelhard Curator of 19th-Century, Modern, and Contemporary Art, chose Cai as the first contemporary Chinese artist to have a solo exhibition at the Met. Tinterow noted that the exhibition

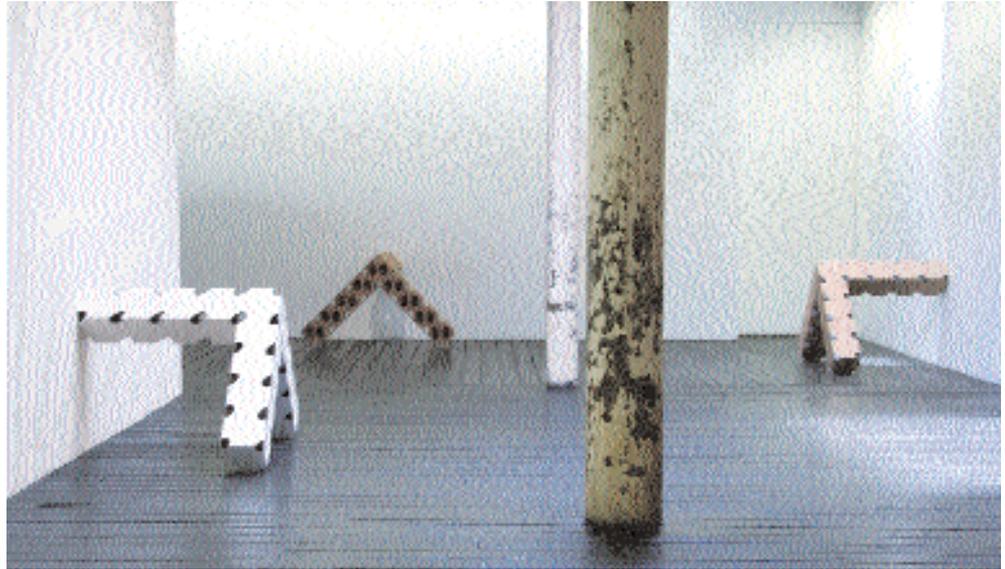


CAI: COURTESY THE ARTIST

also offered technical firsts, such as hoisting the 15-by-9.5-foot glass *Transparent Monument* up the outside of the building to the roof. *Transparent Monument* is a triple-layered plank of tempered glass set between two pedestals. Five life-like, “dead,” gray birds lie on either side of the glass. The glass integrated vistas and visitors on both sides, temporarily uniting museum, park, city, subjects, objects, life, and death.

Even more ambitious, *Nontransparent Monument*, a 9-by-32-foot green limestone relief in nine panels, depicts 70 specific vignettes detailing events since 9/11, including Hurricane Katrina, the 2004 tsunami, Avian flu, same-sex marriage, Casey Sheehan and mothers against the Iraq War, Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse, the Afghanistan War, cloned dogs, SARS, and the Three Gorges Dam—a corrupt \$24 billion government project to build the world’s largest hydroelectric dam by destroying a historic region in China and displacing its many humble inhabitants. The incredible detail and humor in the overall design and carving should make this a designated historic monument. Cai has memorialized the schizophrenia, madness, and chaos that heads of state, people with lucid and unbalanced heads, and nature itself have brazenly displayed.

Clear Sky Black Cloud re-created the specter of 9/11. Every day at noon during the show’s run, two explosions sent two small black puffs to block the view of two towers west of Central Park. Using non-hazardous materials, Cai memorialized a moment of great loss and then offered an invitation to focus on the remaining towers and vistas. *Clear Sky Black Cloud* was a memorial with a positive vision. Cai has used gunpowder, which the Chinese invented, creatively and dramatically throughout his career. Interacting with the Manhattan skyline, alluding to centuries of art history, and



Gay Outlaw, *Three-Legged Inversions*, 2005. Cardboard, paper, and glue, installation view.

embodying a strong aesthetic vision, these four transformative works bore witness with moving transparency.

—Jan Garden Castro

NEW YORK
Gay Outlaw
Hosfelt Gallery

Gay Outlaw’s exhibition “Structure and Void” playfully explored cubes and cylinders in relation to inner and surrounding space. Displayed in four cube-like galleries, the show opened with *Impermeable II*, a column of transparent vinyl perforated with cylinders sewn with red thread. Unrolled from the wall to the floor, Outlaw’s red-seamed Minimalist form appears to be an homage to Eva Hesse.

While Sol LeWitt’s investigation of cubes seems an obvious influence, Outlaw says, “My most profound influence is actually Tony Smith. I like the playfulness of his process, and his devotion to building structures comprised of repeated geometric forms...his pieces command that you walk around them, which is what I aspire to with my sculpture. I want you to walk around the pieces while you are looking

at them and notice what that phenomenon feels like...Almost all of the pieces in the show are based on multiples of the same form at different scales, a cube with 13 perforations. They’re not made of the cubes themselves—they are made from patterns generated by these constructions. There’s no mysticism in the number, just that it was the most complex perforated cube that I could easily mass-produce. I am drawn to the cube because of its ubiquity—it’s a challenge to look at them in new ways. Also, the cube is the first form, appropriately or not, that’s given to very small children to teach about building.”

Outlaw’s four *Three-Legged Inversions*, constructed from cardboard, paper, and glue, offer an interplay between painted “holes” and real holes that highlights the “structure and void” theme. There appear to be white holes along the edges when the interior of the form is white. Two are white on the exterior, with black ovals either inside or outside, and two have brown exteriors with the ovals again on the inside or the outside. The triple-trunked forms lean against the wall for support, with two legs on the floor. Even more than

Robert Gober’s hairy appendages sticking out from the wall, the *Inversions* suggest continuity between sculpture and architecture. The bare white walls and dark floors reinforced the Minimalist forms and colors, as well as the works’ relationships with each other and the surrounding spaces. *The PLB*, a three-legged construction made of reclaimed cypress from Golden Gate Park, is a solid version of the “empty” cardboard *Inversions*.

These and the other inventive, labor-intensive works in the show were created between 2004 and 2006. The *Camo Cubes* (*Positive, Negative, Red, Yellow, Blue*) are covered with a silkscreen photo pattern of tiny holes; the cylinders in each cube are lined with a half-tone pattern in the same hue. Even though the same delicate color is used for each cube and its cylinders, they “look” different—another case of contrasting perceptions and realities in these works.

One gallery contained a translucent coroplast zigzag construction, *For Sale by Owner*. This object, which hovers off the floor like a low-flying roof, is punctuated by cylindrical holes in dayglow orange that seem