

Dewitt Godfrey
Black & White Gallery

By LILY FAUST

By flexing and systematically bolting lengths of steel sheets into fluid round forms, and stacking them carefully on top of each other, Dewitt Godfrey creates delightful, airy wall sculptures that simultaneously contain and negate space. His piece, *Picker Sculpture*, is presented in two versions. The indoor version, a floor-to-ceiling work that consists of ten vertically stacked open steel cylinders of varying sizes, is bolted securely together, extending from wall to wall and blocking entry to the back. Viewers have to walk through the piece, feeling the tensed steel crunch underfoot, in order to reach the other side. In the back of the gallery, in the outdoor courtyard, we find the outdoor version. Larger than the work in the main

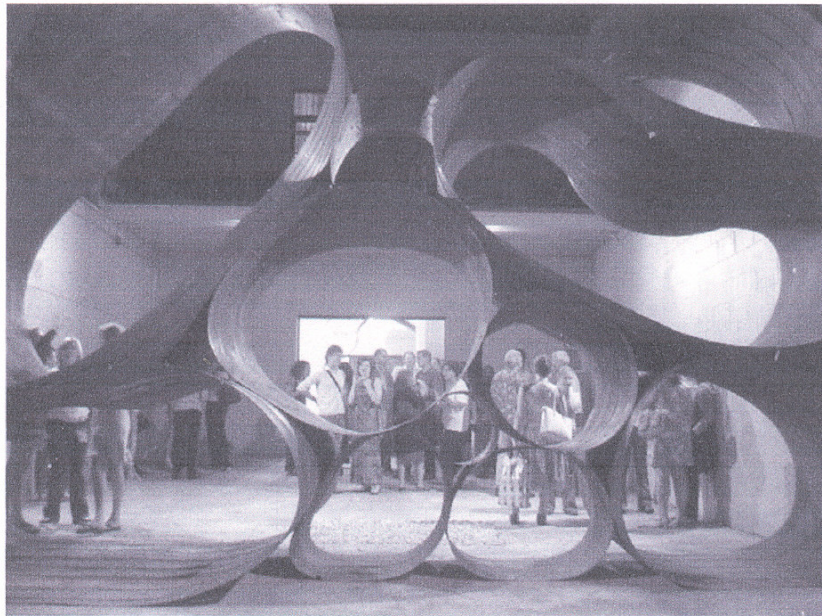
gallery, this piece loosely mirrors the indoor version.

Both pieces converge on the balance of absence and presence, weight and airiness. The cylindrical steel forms appear linear and spatially open when viewed from afar. Secured steel shapes that hold nothing, they define and confine space, constituting a lofty wall. Although made of steel, the work appears weightless and light, reminiscent of a magnified, three-dimensional cross-section of porous matter. Approaching and walking through it, however, the viewer responds to the potential tension contained within the lengths of metal strips that are kept in place with nuts and bolts. The interplay between tension and resilience, hinged on the steel's flexibility, is articulated to the viewer through the experience of walking, conveying a floating sensation while being weighted to the ground.

The sculpture's individual elements, the compositional geometry of circles and ellipses that make up the whole, vary in size from about a foot in diameter to several feet across. Ovoid, circular, or consisting of an asymmetrical combination of both, these forms interact with one another, enhancing the visual excitement inherent in the work. The smaller forms fit precisely within the gaps between larger loops. The positing of space is an important property of this sculpture. If space can be defined as the expanse of "nothingness" within the three-

dimensional field, then Godfrey's sculpture plays out the rhythms between something and nothing. Fusing open forms with the weighty liquidity of metal; creating shadows, depths and voids by overlapping steel loops, Godfrey's sculpture sets off a playful exchange between presence and absence that incorporates emptiness as a tangible factor, almost visible in the mind's eye inside of the metal.

Through 10/18.



Dewitt Godfrey *Picker Sculpture*, 2004. (Photo credit: Joel Simpson) Indoor/Outdoor Versions, steel tubes, dimensions variable. Courtesy: Black & White Gallery, New York