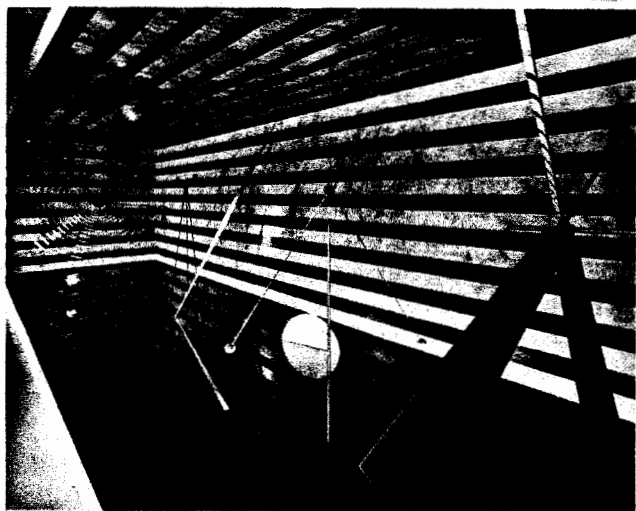


Wadsworth Atheneum

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Vie-a-Vie, 1988
Photo by T. Charles Erickson
Courtesy of Art Galaxy,
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Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel/MATRIX 99

Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel have worked collaboratively since 1983 to create a series of magical tableaux which seem to be windows on the cosmos. These works express Jones' and Ginzel's personal reverence for the mysteries of the universe. These are urban artists who find wonderment in all manifestations of the random congregation of events that brought matter and energy to its current state. Says Jones, "Miracles do exist. One miracle is our own consciousness which we behold."

Together Jones and Ginzel have made nearly a dozen installations, most in traditional gallery and museum settings, but they have also constructed works in which the viewpoint is located outdoors, looking into an exterior window, and one of extensive proportions, *Pananemone (all winds)* (1987), currently on view in City Hall Park, Manhattan. Their works are highly theatrical and yet informed with considerable restraint. Despite the months of elaborate experimentation, planning and preparation that precede each installation, their public presentations are always quietly respectful of the beauty of natural forces, light, color and shape.

They use the simplest materials, such as water, sand, pigment, nylon, silk, lead, brass, copper and gold, revealing the intrinsic worth of things which might be otherwise dismissed as commonplace. With old-fashioned devices such as steam, valves and small motors cleverly applied they accomplish numinous effects. Ginzel is modest about the ingenuity behind his finely-tuned feats of engineering which assure an exceptional elegance to the kinetic aspects of their work. He prefers to stress that they "are not using any technology that isn't readily available on Canal Street." Furthermore, adds Jones, "These technological devices themselves pose great mysteries." Invariably their work intends to honor such basic principles of the physical world as magnetism, electricity and gravity.

Kinetic art can be traced back to Leonardo's revolving stage for the Duke of Milan in 1496, Greek hydro-clocks (*clepsydra*) and before. For centuries the *automata* of clock displays in European town halls were competitively intricate. More recently it was Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916) and the other futurists who declared a radical break with the prevailing convention of "stasis" in Western Art. In the aftermath of cubism it seemed that sculpture might be the logical medium to express aspects of real time and real space. (The challenge of introducing real time and real space into the visual arts would also eventually engage the interests of some of the leading conceptual artists, no one more than Hans Haacke. See Haacke's *Condensation Cube* (1963-65) upstairs in the LeWitt Collection, Colt 201).

Naum Gabo's (1890-1977) *Realistic Manifesto*, written in Moscow in 1920, designated "kinetic rhythms" as essential to "a vital image of space and time." Alexander Calder (1898-1976) made a series of mechanical sculptures in the 'thirties. Eventually many artists, including Gabo and Calder, rejected the awkwardness that mechanization seemed to impose on such efforts. Calder opted instead for the austerity of movement derived from invisible air currents, and, in 1937, Gabo shared his frustrations and disappointments with kinetic art in his stringent clarification that "the motion is of importance and not the mechanism which produces it." Jones and Ginzel join a distinguished list of visual artists from Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), Georges Vantongerloo (1886-1965), Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964), and Marcel Duchamp (1887-1964), to Jean Tinguely (1925-), Takis (1925-) and James Turrell (1943-) who, throughout this century have sought, with varying degrees of success, to engage time and movement in their work. Jones and Ginzel's achievement in this realm has been the discretion with which they employ a variety of natural forces.

Seraphim (1985) is a work inspired by the remarkable devotional displays (*presepi*) Jones and Ginzel observed in Roman churches at Christmastime in 1983. Very elaborate contemporary special effects are used to embellish the traditional nativity scenes. Jones and Ginzel, both of whom were raised without religious upbringing, have a reverent sensibility that has emerged without doctrine. *Seraphim* is a visual metaphor for their own "sense of joy, reverence, curiosity and wonderment." The gold ring is a halo (actually rolled steel covered with gold leaf), a symbol for "the absence of the need to invent angels, to fabricate miracles."

Four vertical nylon threads vibrate sine waves like near-invisible energies, the heartbeat of the piece. The steaming vessel, like a baptismal font, is the focal point. The vapor is a metaphor for Seraphim itself - elusive and mysterious. The shadow which the vessel casts on the white silica sandscape is also very much a presence in the piece. The low blue arc, a recurring shape in Jones and Ginzel's work, is a reference to the lintels over the doorways in Cairo's Cities of the Dead. It suggests the horizon line of the sphere on which we live as well as the dividing line between what we know and what is unknown, the dividing line between our lives on this earth and the unknown beyond. The large double-edged needle rotates as a clock, marking the passage of time. The filaments that emanate from the upper left are flecked with gold, an *homage* to Giovanni Bernini (1598-1680) and the dynamism of baroque art. The back wall is punctuated with occasionally flickering lights, like little points of energies which, in fact, they are. A scrim is placed before all, not to distance the audience but to create an atmosphere, to unify all the elements into one volume.

Later this spring, Jones and Ginzel will build a long-term installation here at the Atheneum. This will be the first time a museum has acquired a work of art by these artists for its permanent collection, an acquisition made possible by a gift from the David Bermant Foundation: Color, Light, Motion. This piece, called *Analemma* (1988), will be built just inside two windows on the north side of the Avery Building, visible from the outside of the museum looking in twenty-four hours a day.

Analemma is, in part, the artists' response to an indoor-outdoor site which is at times bathed in sunlight. For artists whose works have been primarily dark and theatrical this more openly exposed situation has presented many challenges. (*Analemma* itself means a graduated scale having the shape of a figure 8 which shows the sun's declination and the equation of time for each day of the year.) Not surprisingly, rather than block daylight out as they did in their earlier *Spheric Storm* (1985), Jones and Ginzel have decided to embrace the solar presence.

Analemma uses the two adjacent windows to explore the idea of duality. Meaning is often derived through the definition of opposites. Light and dark, for instance, have significance only in reference to each other. *Analemma* will be a visual metaphor about the boundaries between fundamental opposites: day and night, mortality and immortality.

Kristin Jones was born in Washington, D. C. in 1956. She spent much of her childhood, the daughter of a government service officer, in such places as Cyprus, Poland, Switzerland and Norway. She attended Brown University, St. Martin's School of Art and received a B. F. A. from Rhode Island School of Design in 1979 and an M. F. A. from Yale University in 1983. She received a Fulbright Fellowship for study in Rome, 1983-84, and she was a P. S. 1 Studio Artist at the Institute for Art and Urban Resources National Studio Program for 1984-86. In 1985 Jones was a Guest Sculptor at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Andrew Ginzel was born in Chicago in 1954. He attended Bennington College and has worked as principal assistant to Red Grooms and as principal engineer to Alice Aycock. His travels have included extensive study of various architectures including steamboat gothic and plantation stilt cabins along the Mississippi River, Islamic and Christian architectural traditions in Egypt, Tunisia, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, and, most recently, ancient sites in Upper Egypt and early mosque architecture in Cairo. Ginzel is currently on the faculty at the School of Visual Arts, New York City.

In 1985 both artists received an Artist's Grant from Artists Space, a National Endowment for the Arts grant for Sculpture, and awards from the New York State Arts Council and the New York Foundation for the Arts. In 1986 their piece *Adytum* (1986) from "Art in the Anchorage" received a "Bessie" at The New York Dance Performance Awards. Jones and Ginzel live in New York City and work at their studio in Brooklyn. They are represented by Art Galaxy, New York City.

Andrea Miller-Keller
Curator of Contemporary Art



Kristin Jones
and Andrew Ginzel,
1987. Photo by
by T. Charles Erickson
(detail)

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