

BETTY CUNINGHAM GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE
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Christopher Wilmarth: Sculpture and Drawings

October 29 – December 3, 2005

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

Opening: Saturday, October 29, 2005, 5 – 7 pm



Christopher Wilmarth
EVERS, 1976-1977
Etched glass and steel
96 x 45 x 30 in.

On Saturday, October 29th, 2005, Betty Cunningham Gallery will open an exhibition of the sculpture and drawings of Christopher Wilmarth. Wilmarth who died at the age of forty-four in 1987, had a short but very distinguished career. By the age of 30, Wilmarth's work was already in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Philadelphia Museum and the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis).

Wilmarth graduated from Cooper Union in 1966 and shortly thereafter began exhibiting in New York: first at the Graham Gallery in 1968 and then at Paula Cooper in 1971 and 1972. By 1978, Wilmarth, disillusioned with the art market, departed from all dealer representation and established The Studio of the First Amendment, a place where he could show his own works free from the demands of the commercial art world. He stated, "If it wasn't magic, it was merchandise," and Wilmarth did not produce "merchandise". At The Studio for the First Amendment, Wilmarth realized three shows: first in 1978 of his current work at that time, 1980 of the *Gnomon's Parade* sculptures, and then in 1982 of the *Breath* series. However, despite his idealistic view of being an

“independent artist,” he found the demands of dealing his own work more than he had anticipated. In 1982, Wilmarth joined Hirschl & Adler Modern, where he realized two major shows: *Layers* in 1984 and *Delancy Backs* in 1986.

On November 19, 1987, Wilmarth committed suicide at the age of forty-four. And as a testimony to his strong following, The Museum of Modern Art mounted a retrospective sixteen months later, opening in April of 1989. In 2001, Susan Wilmarth-Rabineau, his widow, donated the complete archive to the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University. And in turn, the Fogg Art Museum mounted the 2003 exhibition, *Christopher Wilmarth: Drawings into Sculpture*. In 2004, Princeton University Press published an award-winning monograph, *Christopher Wilmarth: Light and Gravity*, written by Steven Henry Madoff with essays by Edward Saywell and Nancy Milford.

The current exhibition includes ten sculptures spanning from the early wood and glass works through to the seventies’ etched glass and steel pieces and finally his last works - the blown glass and bronze works of the eighties. The exhibition, *Christopher Wilmarth: Sculpture and Drawings* is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue. It will remain on view through December 3, 2005. For further information and/or photographs please contact the gallery at 212 242-2772 or info@bettycunninghamgallery.com.

NEXT EXHIBITION: *Gordon Moore, New Paintings and Drawings*, December 8, 2005 – January 28, 2006