

ENIGMATIC CONSTRUCTIONS

(RETRO)ACTIVE ART WORK(S)

BY

MARTIN JOHNSON

AT THE

1846 COURTHOUSE GALLERY

APRIL 30 - JUNE 12, 1988

ARTIST RECEPTION

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 1988 7-9 P.M.

ORGANIZED BY THE PORTSMOUTH MUSEUMS

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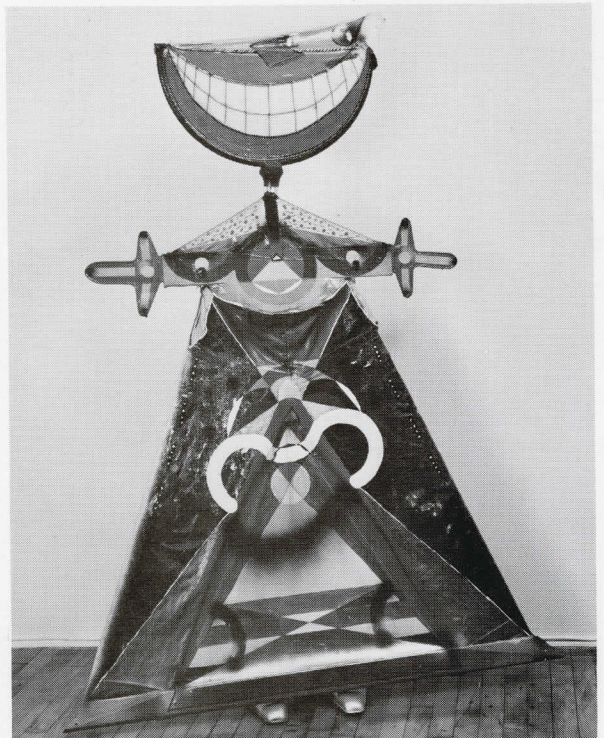
Martin Johnson's work is indeed raw; its enigmatic appearance, defiant presence, and animation are akin to graffiti made by an untrained hand. But appearance can deceive; the fury and concentration of Johnson's attack should convince us that his work is not something that just anybody can do. Johnson is an artists' artist.

Formally trained as an architect, Johnson brings a pluralistic attitude to his work. His forte is the synthesis of physical and conceptual notions, while structural and spatial economics play an equally important role in his sometime often humorous investigations.

The work included in this exhibition, created over a decade, speaks to us as much about Johnson's private realities as about his investigations into the process of art making and the integration of various art movements. He uses formal conventions of Cubism and its derivatives (visual concerns dealing with picture space as they relate the real world of three-dimensions to the essentially illusory, two-dimensional world of the canvas). The notion of form as content, coupled with the Conceptualist movements' use of language, intersect and merge with a Duchampian tactic of appropriating found objects.

Verification of Johnson's process is evident in both the implicit physicality of formal and spontaneous procedures as well as the post-psychedelic palette that is used in his imagery. The proliferation of neon color is evidence of the works' animation, immediacy, and visual asperity.

Tim Close
Arts Curator



Wepants Fors, Pace, 1982

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