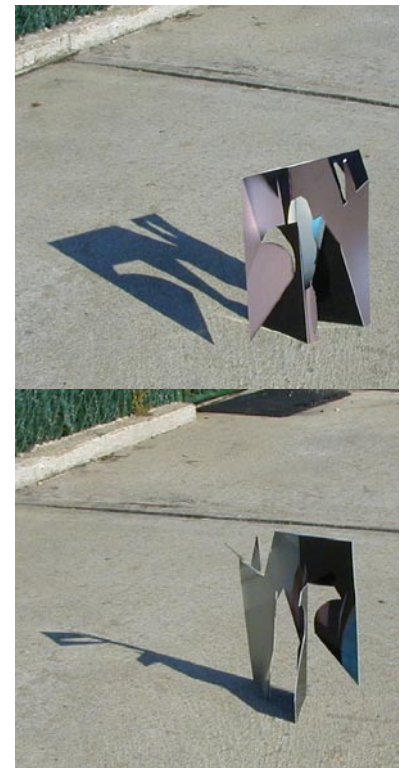
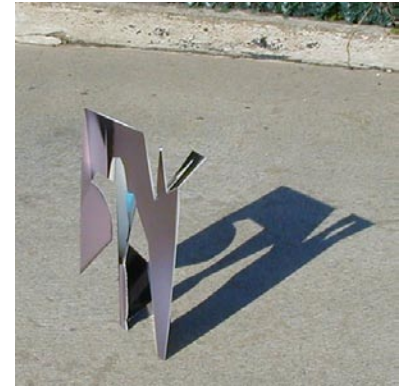


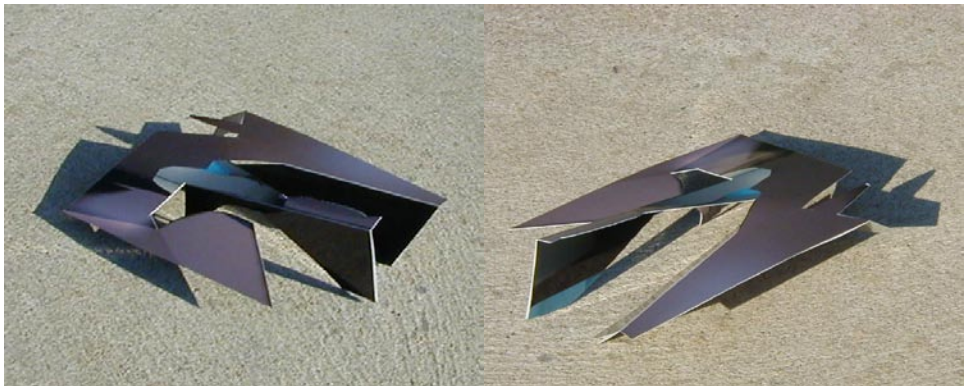
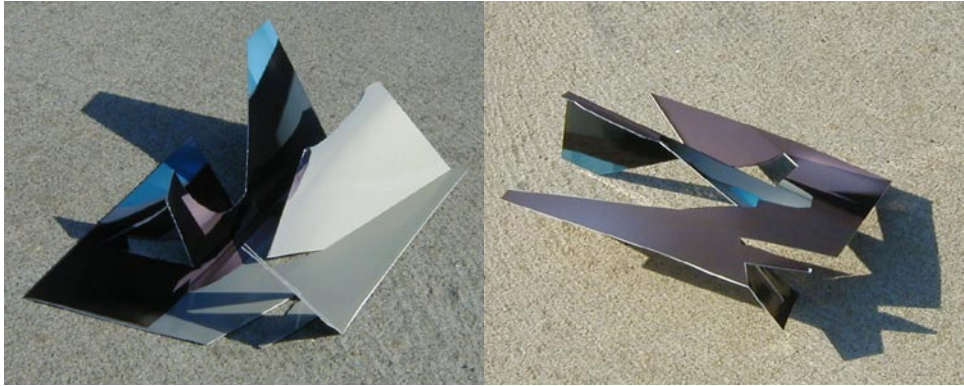
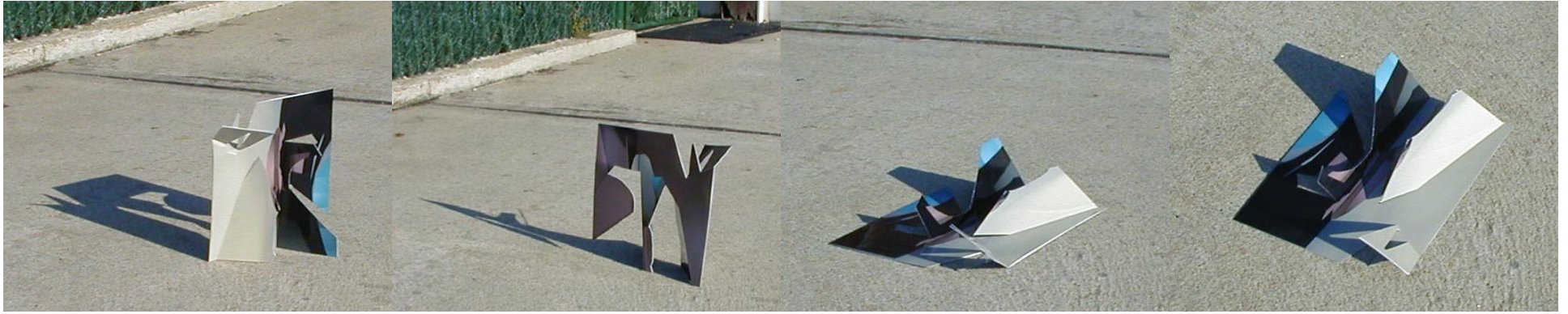


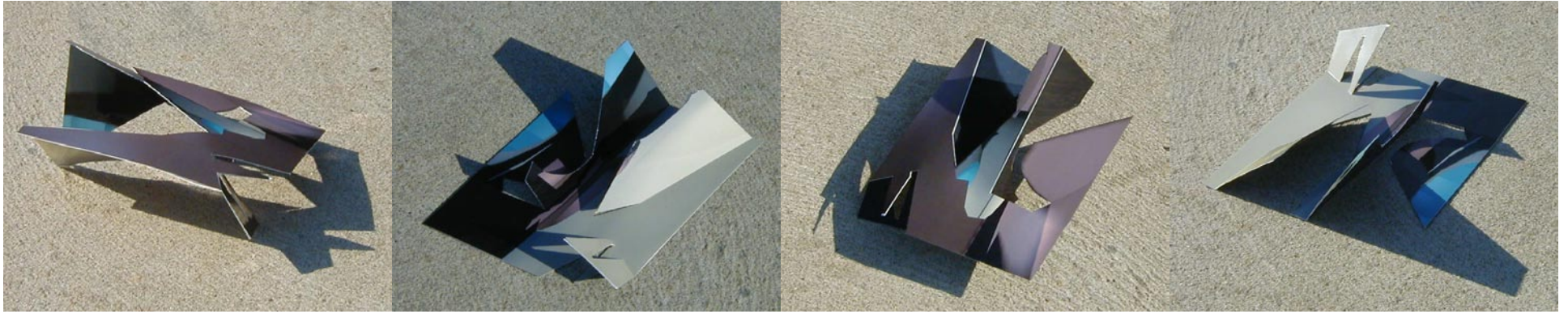
11.20.2002 - Bartlebooth

Duncan Brown, ZenLux

Over the course of the Summer of 2001, the images originally rendered and printed for the Santa Fe Art Institute residency were manipulated through two series exploring them as "CutOuts" and "FoundEdges." To extend the exploration into three dimensions and, find a use for some extra prints, two images were laminated together. In the vein of a much earlier painting-related series, "Gates," the outline of forms from one side provided the major cut and fold lines, and the other side a secondary set of folds. The resulting freestanding sculpture was then documented in various locations and positions. On completion of the photography, the piece was flattened, fed through a paper shredder, and put out for recycling.









Let us imagine a man whose wealth is equalled only by his indifference to what wealth generally brings, a man of exceptional arrogance who wishes to fix, to describe, and to exhaust not the whole world - merely to state such an ambition is enough to invalidate it - but a constituted fragment of the world: in the face of the inextricable incoherence of things, he will set out to execute a (necessarily limited) programme right the way through, in all its irreducible, intact entirety.

In other words, Bartlebooth resolved one day that his whole life would be organised around a single project, an arbitrarily constrained programme with no purpose outside its own completion.

The idea occurred to him when he was twenty. At first it was only a vague idea, a question looming - what should I do? - with an answer taking shape: nothing. Money, power, art, women did not interest Bartlebooth. Nor did science, nor even gambling. There were only neckties and horses that just about did, or, to put it another way, beneath these futile illustrations (but thousands of people do order their lives effectively around their ties, and far greater numbers do so around their weekend horse-riding) there stirred, dimly, a certain idea of perfection.

It grew over the following months and came to rest on three guiding principles.

The first was moral: the plan should not have to do with an exploit or record, it would be neither a peak to scale nor an ocean floor to reach. What Bartlebooth would do would not be heroic, or spectacular; it would be something simple and discreet, difficult of course but not impossibly so, controlled from start to finish and conversely controlling every detail of the life of the man engaged upon it.

The second was logical: all recourse to chance would be ruled out, and the project would make time and space serve as the abstract coordinates plotting the ineluctable recursion of identical events oc-

curing inexorably in their allotted places, on their allotted dates.

The third was aesthetic: the plan would be useless, since gratuitousness was the sole guarantor of its rigour, and would destroy itself as it proceeded; its perfection would be circular: a series of events which when concatenated nullify each other: starting from nothing, passing through precise operations on finished objects, Bartlebooth would end up with nothing.

Thus a concrete programme was designed, which can be stated succinctly as follows.

For ten years, from 1925 to 1935, Bartlebooth would acquire the art of painting watercolours.

For twenty years, from 1935 to 1955, he would travel the world, painting, at a rate of one watercolour each fortnight, five hundred seascapes of identical format (royal, 65cm x 50cm) depicting seaports. When each view was done, he would dispatch it to a specialist craftsman (Gaspard Winckler), who would glue it to a thin wooden backing board and cut it into a jigsaw puzzle of seven hundred and fifty pieces.

For twenty years, from 1955 to 1975-, Bartlebooth, on his return to France, would reassemble the jigsaw puzzles in order, at a rate, once again, of one puzzle a fortnight. As each puzzle was finished, the seascape would be "re-texturised" so that it could be removed from its backing, returned to the place where it had been painted - twenty years before - and dipped in a detergent solution whence would emerge a clean and unmarked sheet of Whatman paper.

Thus no trace would remain of an operation which would have been, throughout a period of fifty years, the sole motivation and unique activity of its author.