

THE MATURITY PLAYGROUND  
An Exhibition of Sculpture

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## Abstract

Within the context of relational art, the ongoing series, *Maturity Playground*, incorporates pre-fabricated playground components used as sculptural material. The use of slides, swings, trampolines, and merry-go-rounds has been disrupted. These structures are manipulated through placement and colour to the point where they become socially tense or awkward situations for adults. Playground structures in the art gallery subvert conventional notions of art, the understanding of appropriate behavior in an art environment and the understanding of play as an aesthetic element. Such re-placement creates a disruption to the psychological associations attached to the activity of the object. In this new context, the works allow participation and promote the idea that play can be a model for co-operative behavior.

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*To Trevor Gould and Allan Kaprow who taught me that sculpture is life itself*

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## Introduction

Sculpture is spontaneous. Not in the sense that it has a continuous viscosity, but that it becomes spontaneous when the expected ideas of the artist dissolve into an unforeseeable reception through public participation. Shifting from a painting practice a few years ago, I began to notice that sculpture and installation art could potentially involve the public much more experientially than a work on canvas.

Shifting to sculpture came about because of influential artists such as Allan Kaprow and the Fluxus art group. Kaprow's happenings of the 1960's in which he staged spontaneous events with his audience and the public, combined with the games that the Fluxus group presented, opened up the possibility of a world of the unexpected and chance in my own work. Kaprow's "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" manifesto will always guide my practice as he shifted the commonplace by discussing how everyday objects could be regarded as art.<sup>1</sup>

Vito Acconci and Richard Serra were equally influential. Acconci understood the blur of art and life. His early performance art involved the use of his own body in provocative situations. Some of these included biting his own skin in a fierce manner to the point where he left imprints of his teeth onto his skin, in *Trademarks* from 1970,<sup>2</sup> and in *Following Piece* 1969, Acconci would follow complete strangers off the street until they became inaccessible.<sup>3</sup> Serra positioned massive steel walls in order to play with the viewer's psychological and phenomenological orientation of space by manipulating the material's bends, folds, and height in relation to the position of the viewer.<sup>4</sup> He promoted a

physical experience for the viewer by focusing on the space and direction where one walks or stands in relation to his structures.

Physical participation was crucial to the experience of these works. Participation in sculpture allows the public to become actively and physically involved with the work. What interests me is how an object can become activated when a viewer approaches it and how a person can become reflected within this activation. For the past two years I have developed a practice of taking everyday pre-fabricated objects linked to childhood and modifying their conventional function to the point that they create disorienting situations for adults. When approaching and experiencing this modified playground equipment in an art gallery, the works present opportunities for people to rethink their psychological and social associations with these objects.

I have recently been interested in using playground components in my work. In the public sphere, playground equipment is found in parks. The exhibition *Maturity Playground* presents the opportunity and a context for adults to engage in play by allowing them to interact with the playground equipment normally used only by children. It is an attempt to re-engage an art viewing public that is largely adult, in something lost in the seemingly arbitrary division between child and adulthood.

## Playground History

What is interesting in park history is that such grounds were not intended at first for children. In the book *People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space*, the chapter on *Neighborhood Parks* provides an introduction of Galen Crazz' park history. In 1982, Crazz, a professor of architecture, traced back four phases of park growth: the *pleasure ground* from 1850-1900, the *reform park* from 1900-1930, the *recreation facility* from 1930-1965, and the *open space system* from 1965 to the current date.<sup>5</sup> The Industrial Revolution of the 1800's with its emphasis on creating urban populations of industrial and factory workers promoted the creation of an area for these workers to escape daily life and therefore *pleasure grounds* began appearing at the outer edges of cities, composed of long walks, grass, trees, and water. These grounds allowed people to come into contact with nature because this was lacking in the daily urban industrial setting. Crazz identifies the *reform park* as the first truly urban park as it was a located area within the city and thus attracted local groups of families and children. The urban park came about from a social movement occurring at the time to help the life of communities in neighborhoods. The *recreation facility* incorporated an interest in athletes and large fields for sports. The *open space system* characterizes our current parks and reflects a love for urban living. These grounds usually combine the three previous park phases in one single area. Crazz stated that parks were created because of the social community dilemmas of the areas where they were built.<sup>6</sup> The erection of parks

was intended to help the local community by allowing people a place to congregate and socialize.

Toward the end of the 1800's, society began to identify play as a legitimate childhood activity in the public sphere by introducing playground equipment. In her book *American Playgrounds*, Susan Solomon describes the reasons why children's play was given public attention through playground structures:

“Freestanding purpose-built American playgrounds, in place by the 1880s, resulted from demands that were often overlapping: crime prevention, character building, and just plain exercise. The role of the playgrounds in the integration of immigrants into a common society has been studied only recently. The playground, particularly during the Progressive reform movement of the early 1900s, benefited from the widespread belief that play was child's work. John Dewey's theories, which portrayed children as miniature adults who had to adapt to their environment by actively exploring it, functioned as an important source for this conception. Children not engaged in their own profession were believed to stray into delinquency. A slightly different stance maintained that physical activity, especially muscle control, had a moral dimension that would create better citizens.”<sup>7</sup>

But who designs these structures for parks? Not only architects, engineers, and city planners, but also artists. Sculptors have a history in playground design. In the 1940's, Isamu Noguchi, a Japanese artist who moved to America, was the first sculptor to try to get New York City park commissions because of his innovative slide and earth mound designs that incorporated the natural curves of the earth into his playgrounds.<sup>8</sup> In 1953, Egon Moller-Nielson from Europe was the first successful sculptor to get park commissions from the

American company *Creative Playthings* and their division *Play Sculptures*, which marked the mixing of sculpture and playground design.<sup>9</sup> In 1954, *Creative Playthings* had associations with the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MOMA) and together created a countrywide “Play Sculpture Competition” that received over 350 sculpture entries that were playground equipment proposals which also were public sculptures.<sup>10</sup> At the time, it was believed that if children played on sculptures they could grow to be more educated future art patrons.<sup>11</sup> Sculpture and playground design was featured again in 1967, when the November/December cover of *Art in America* incorporated a reference to play equipment. The MOMA New York supported this second surge in interest by funding artists’ playground projects.<sup>12</sup>

There is currently another wave of sculptors who are interested in playgrounds. Although, the difference now is that artists are taking equipment and placing it into the art realm while in park history, artists were fabricating an art object to place it in a public area that was not considered an art environment. Contemporary sculptors and their projects that come to mind are Carsten Höller’s *Test Site*<sup>13</sup>, using slides as useful transportation devices, Lyla Rye’s *Topsy-Turvy*<sup>14</sup>, depicting playground components as architectural fantasies, and Carla Zaccagnini’s *Variable Effect Chain Reaction*<sup>15</sup>, using playgrounds to promote play as a method for exchange between people. These artists use playgrounds to create participatory situations for people of any age. Extending from their practice, I take playground equipment as sculptural material and bring it into the sphere of art to give form to my ideas.

## Play Theory and Play Outcome

The subject that is at the core of my work is play. The concept of play is not confined to childhood nor does it disappear as people age. Play is continuous throughout life, however some forms of play are heightened in adulthood and others in childhood. Karl Groos gave an account of this in his study, *The Play of Man*, from 1901. Groos mentioned adult play in several forms. The first is exercise and an active engagement with sport-like activities that cannot be achieved in childhood, as Groos stated that this type of play is “pursued reflectively, scientifically”.<sup>16</sup> The second is love and sexual relationships that is not of interest to children.<sup>17</sup> The third is an avid appreciation for social gatherings and festivals where, Groos declared, adults achieve the strongest sociality through dancing, fighting, and drinking alcohol as excitable forms of social play.<sup>18</sup> The fourth is the social aspect in general which is based on a human need to relate to others.<sup>19</sup> Adults are concerned with these four points in terms of playful activities. Play is not given up nor is it lost as people mature. It simply shifts to another form.

“Play Theory”, introduced by the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in 1938, is the theory that human culture arises from playing.<sup>20</sup> In order for play to occur, three characteristics must exist. Firstly, that play demonstrates an act of freedom; secondly, that it is found outside the ordinary; and thirdly, that it holds its own time.<sup>21</sup> What happens when these three components are placed in the sphere of *Maturity Playground*? An act of spontaneity is introduced into the work through interactivity. Although the work is open ended there are definitely

rules to play. Once someone walks into the installation, one is crossing into a realm of play and outside ordinary life. Lastly, a visitor can experience a lapse of time when interacting and playing with the work.

A very important element that arises when considering time spent with my work is repetition. Huizinga discusses repetition as the inner structure of play, since activities can always be repeated.<sup>22</sup> Repetition is indeed a sculptural element; in fact it is one that can occur in any art form. What act does repetition perform in art? Simply put, it gives comfort to the viewer who experiences recognizable patterns. However, there are different kinds of repetition: there is this repetition of patterns in art and there is the one found in play; that of seeking out something over and over again which signifies a loss of time. In play and art, repetition does the same thing: it captivates us and holds us in a space of amusement.

The swing sculpture, *Maturity Correlation*, is an example of repetition and social play. Swinging is one of the most universal forms of play as it produces “hypnotic” repetitive action that can trigger meditative thought in the player.<sup>23</sup> For the swing sculpture, two swings face each other. The visitor can visualize the tension as well as the play inherent in the work. The swing is a way to allow participants the chance to swing in relation to another person, thereby introducing direct sociality and regulating swinging as an action of trust.

Using the swing in art is not new. Vito Acconci used it in several political installations from the 1970’s depicting American patriotism. He used it in *Another Candy Bar From GI Joe* (1977) where the visitor was invited to sit

on the swing seat, triggering a recording of troublesome music, and *Instant House* (1980) where the visitor was also invited to sit on the swing seat to activate the movement of four walls placed around the swing.<sup>24</sup> Carsten Höller used the swing as well in an earlier work from 1992, *Hard, Hard to be a Baby*, where he installed a children's swing on the edge of a skyscraper, creating a dramatic tension because of its location in space and the implied association of harm to children, suggesting risk and danger.<sup>25</sup>

Another issue dealt with in the *Maturity Playground* is play outcome, which is what people regard as achievement or satisfaction and is often found in play as a motivation for one's actions. The work presents people with situations to deal with: the sculptural objects are not *complete* givens. They allow people to make them function to their advantage or disadvantage. The work's outcome lies in the decisions the participants, for they are the ones that see the work as a situation to use to their potential.

However, not everyone will mount the work in this series. Visitors can be divided into two groups: the first group involves those who come to the work and view it. The second group is composed of those who decide to take it upon themselves to interact with the work. The people in the second group appear to feel that seeing the work's form acts as an invitation to play. There is no right or wrong way to respond to the work. One can see and think of the possible implications of play and danger just as one can act out the action they think is still there. Since both sides need to be satisfied, neither side can take precedence. I can neither put up a sign in the space which states, "DO NOT



USE”, nor a sign that states “VIEWER’S PARTICIPATION IS IMPERATIVE TO UNDERSTANDING THE SCULPTURE”. Viewers would have objections to these statements, as would I. However, given my background as a painter and the reason I shifted to sculpture for its experiential potential, I feel that viewing is not as engaging as participating. Looking at a work and imagining play is not the same as physically acting it out. Returning to Allan Kaprow, his work was seen as promoting participation as play and in regards to his non-theatrical environments, Jeff Kelley provides an insight into the difference of thinking about play and actually playing,

“A plan is not the same as its enactment, however; one is an invitation to play and the other is actually playing. While the invitation is meaningful as metaphor, the enactment of the invitation generates meaning as experience. The spectator ‘embodies’ the metaphor by enacting the plan, and it is this embodiment that constitutes our participation in the work.”<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the reception of the *Maturity Playground*, people need to be able to interact with the sculptures because they are experiential, however, it’s not about the artist choosing a side for the visitor. It’s about what the viewer or participant is willing to do and the artist being open to the unexpected.

Daniel Olson is a Canadian artist who uses play in his work. He takes toys and manipulates them to the point where their function has shifted or that they hold an added element not normally embedded or attached to them. He asks, “What shall we do?”<sup>27</sup> His work questions what is presently around us and how we understand things. Likewise, it conjures up some of the reasons why people use toys. In my work, sometimes people activate the playgrounds and

therefore play in order to work out the situation at hand. I'm not asking the same question as Olson. Rather, I am constantly questioning the social and psychological function in relation to the art object by proposing *how we can make use of something*.

Self-reflective adoption is apparent and crucial to the work. People need to be able to see themselves in relation to the sculptures. Gabriel Orozco is a sculptor interested in participatory in-between spaces and presents such fused spaces when he exhibits reconfigured games, such as *Ping Pond Table*, where he extended a game of ping-pong to incorporate four tables rather than two and placed a pond in the middle of them.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, I want to present people with a social situation so that they can make use of it and become reflexive in the viewing and participating experience. A common response from people when approaching the swing set structure, *Maturity Correlation*, is, "Can we try this? We want to see if we can *do it*."<sup>29</sup> People want to interact with the pieces to attempt to achieve something; to challenge each other, to relate to one another, to experience playing with the objects and within the art environment, and to move their bodies with the form of the works. Carsten Höller, a German installation artist using playground and carnival equipment, has stated this perception in a very interesting manner, "It is not you and the object: the object and you are you. It's all about you. But I should say, it's all 'yous'. Because there is no one you, but always at least two yous."<sup>30</sup> Reflection is tied to the reception of the work and is heightened when the sculptural object is used.

## Relational Form

The reason that I encourage interactivity is because I am interested in the value of experience, the use of an object, and the opportunity for people to engage in play. To begin with pre-fabricated childhood objects evoke memories of social play and exhibit cultural play. When people use the sculptures they leave marks or scratches giving usage a trace.

The idea of mark-making has historical precedence. The American art critic Rosalind Krauss first documented mark-making in art.<sup>31</sup> Krauss wrote of this as a trace or imprint made by the artist, such as produced by Marcel Duchamp<sup>32</sup>, and also in regards to the exhibition “*Rooms*” that opened P.S.1 in New York in May 1976. This exhibition of 1970’s artists investigated the ways by which institutional critique could rupture the architecture of the gallery.<sup>33</sup> Her idea of the index of the 1970’s is currently shifting to a new position: artists are no longer concerned with providing their mark, but are rather concerned with providing a platform for the participant to leave one. Obviously, this is not evident in *all* current sculpture, however it is evident when considering Nicolas Bourriaud’s term Relational Aesthetics: art that takes as its point of departure forms of interactivity involving the public and which promotes a *use* over contemplation of the art object or situation.<sup>34</sup>

The imprint is an important part of my work. The participant makes a mark on a structure and this imprint then becomes noticeable by each subsequent participant. What is essential to pinpoint is that this can lead to imitation, which is a concept in play whereby one person will copy the activity

of another for experiential purposes driven by a desire to mimic another while achieving personal satisfaction.<sup>35</sup> An example is *Maturity Bend's* shoe marks on its sliding surface. *Maturity Bend* is a slide sculpture that has an irregular rising second bend within its form. Each time someone has the courage to slide, the sculpture's surface accumulates each mark that people leave as a trace of their participation.

Use and participation are at the core of Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics, although the *Maturity Playground* does not necessarily exist solely in that sphere. Rather, it is somewhere between Relational Aesthetics and the term Relational Antagonism because it takes from both discussions. In 1998, Nicolas Bourriaud coined the term Relational Aesthetics describing art that began appearing in the 1990's, concerned with interactivity and an attempt to provide an ideal state for the visitor in the art environment. In 2004, the British historian Claire Bishop decided to study this and published an article stating that Relational Aesthetics was in fact too happy and only concerned with entertaining the public rather than presenting a critical discourse on art. She coined the term Relational Antagonism to look at the artists who Bourriaud did not mention: ones presenting a form of hostility through their work by introducing relations of distance between people in a political, social, or cultural matter.<sup>36</sup> She did not stop there. In 2006, she published another article claiming that some relational artists could well be accused of exploiting their public because of forced actions which are designed to meet expected realizations of the artist rather than the artist answering to their public.<sup>37</sup> In 2007, the theorist

Rustom Bharucha published an article studying the limits of both Relational Aesthetics and Antagonism and brought to the picture two issues: one was that relational art was at times too easy and he thought that artists needed to get around this in order to present critical work:

“One needs to complicate the easy going affirmation of generosity in art practices in order to inscribe some much needed pain in the actual acts of intervening, interacting and collaborating in public spaces.”<sup>38</sup>

The other was a suggestion to artists that they should not be fearful of the unexpected in the course of an artwork:

“One needs to be critically alert to that moment of discomfiture when such conditioned responses are derailed by impossibility. The ‘impossible’ is that moment in the beyond which signals the radical departure of art practice from the predictability of its protocols and expectations.”<sup>39</sup>

Bharucha was discussing the impact of spontaneity that could benefit contemporary art practice in terms of its public perception, and could lead to a better understanding of the blurring of art and life.

The concepts of discomfort and spontaneity get played out in my practice through the wide range of viewer interaction and involvement with the work. The playground sculptures can elicit a pleasurable and excitable realization for some, because people experience joy around the work, but at other times people experience withdrawal, shock, embarrassment or anger. These moods and feelings are usually expressed by the public as an end result of the work, either by looking but especially by playing. Others feel this way immediately when walking into the installation. The first thing that strikes the

viewer is the prevailing tension in each piece, which could lead to the space being interpreted as hostile. Allowing participation is to allow people the ability to deal with the tension in front of them. Since this participation is voluntary, there are no grounds for exploitation. There is no forced participation. Not all visitors actually experience joy or want to participate. Some have called the work hostile and dangerous just as many others have called it playful and fun. The *Maturity Playground* is indeed a relational exhibition for its potential of engagement, however, people do not always want to relate to each other. Thus, the social relations arising from this series are in constant flux and are unpredictable. Even when works involve one person, that person is always conscious of other people watching and the relations that can occur because of this are also spontaneous.

It is interesting to present people with an unpredictable situation through sculpture. Allowing physical interaction can potentially lead to an adrenaline rush. This is evident in the carnival works by Gelitin art group. For example, they set up a roller coaster in a gallery in Italy and invited people to ride it.<sup>40</sup> This group wanted to induce a heart pumping risk factor when physically experiencing the work. Participation allows for a heightened understanding of the work because the body is in motion, moving through time and space and is coming into physical contact with the piece. The Dutch artist John Kormeling will often employ a sense of physicality within his pieces. For *Mobile Fun (Drive-in Ferris Wheel)* (2000) Kormeling redesigned a Ferris wheel, which allows people to drive their vehicle onto it and take a ride while staying

stationary in their vehicle. Kormeling was proposing new heights and associations to the activity of the car as well as the ride. When this piece was exhibited at the Power Plant in Toronto in the summer of 2004, there were existing vehicles on the Ferris wheel.<sup>41</sup> To give people the opportunity to mount such structures opens up a whole new experience.

My approach to experiential participatory engagement with sculpture is to allow people to physically engage with structures that have a certain psychological tension. The *Maturity Playground* presents the same object or a portion of an object doubled, which produces tension and a conversation that occurs between the doubled objects and between people and the objects. A push and pull strain or stress between the objects is produced because of their proximity to one another. For example, for *Maturity Spin*, two public playground merry-go-rounds are placed next to each other and touch. Two merry-go-rounds placed side-by-side do not exist in actual playgrounds. The object gets doubled in relation to the direction of where the body will go when interacting with it, so the merry-go-rounds are side-by-side and not placed one on top of the other. The object's form is purposely reconfigured to create a tension of potential of danger within the works. However, what is essential to note is that when people interact with the work, it is not to act out the danger but to work around it. People do not intentionally want to injure each other. They want to deal with the situation that the sculptures present and work it out. The sculptures thus present a challenge.

## Process

Overall, my process is not comprised of working in my studio for hours meticulously constructing my pieces. Rather it is a very social one and cannot occur without communication, planning, or working with others in order that an exhibition is realized. Like the work's reception of a social context, the production is social and the imprint of the artist does not really exist.

The *Maturity Playground* series began with a completely fabricated object of a slide. Found objects are being used, deconstructed, and assembled, as pre-fabricated material is acquired, parts are removed, added, or simply manipulated by placement. *Maturity Bend* (slide) does not incorporate any actual commercial playground components into the sculpture. Engineering technicians constructed it. *Maturity Correlation* (swings) includes commercial swing seats, chains, and clasps. *Maturity Reach* (trampolines) includes entirely commercial equipment and *Maturity Spin* (merry-go-rounds) incorporates commercial equipment with a fabricated base. The slide was the playground structure that started this series, but I was constantly thinking about its end result and that it had to be as specific as possible to resemble a real slide with an added disruption. Soon after the slide, the idea of starting projects with pre-fabricated and altered objects that were designed for public play seemed more coherent. Using these objects I felt would make them interesting for adults. The series represents an opportunity for people to use play as a form of working out life's complexities: the swing is based on trust, the slide is based on a disappointment, the trampolines are based on achieving an nervous goal, and the merry-go-



rounds are based on being sick and annoyed of life situations that go nowhere. There is more sense now that the sculptures incorporate pre-fabricated components, for this demonstrates a shift to the original meaning of the objects.

The beginning of my artistic production depends on the ability to find sources that still manufacture the material components needed. Once products arrive at my studio they are catalogued and their formal qualities are noted. They can either stay in the studio, be shipped to either an engineering facility for the form to be altered, or are acceptable enough to go straight to the exhibition location. Work gets stored and categorized and it remains in storage until it is shown again. Projects are installed differently depending on the space of the show.

Colour also plays a vital role in production as it functions to identify the implications of the structures to viewers/participants. The colours employed in the work are taken from the public sphere, such as those found in construction sites, on street signs, or in areas where public safety needs highlighting. What is interesting is that such colours are also found on playground structures. The colours used are known as Safety colours. 'Safety Yellow' is the most suitable to use at the moment for the work because this colour on a public sign means to proceed but with caution and awareness. Likewise, it does the same for the work. It matches the content and form of the sculptures. Michael Beutler is an artist who makes use of the same colour for his PECAFIL public intervention sculptures, as a way for viewers to take notice of the contrast of the objects within the space they are placed in.<sup>42</sup> Unlike using the colour to project a

noticeable contrast in space, I use yellow as it is associated with memory of placement: yellow is used in construction sites because it has a hold on the eyes and therefore helps a construction worker remember where an item was placed in the course of an action or engagement with material.<sup>43</sup> The yellow object becomes ingrained in the construction worker's eye for a period of time so that he or she will remain aware of a situation. I am using this awareness of placement in the work.

The scale of the work is important because it needs to match and reference the human body in order to accommodate people. Works have to be large enough to accommodate any body size and need to be durable. Even if people view the work and do not participate, they have to be able to imagine themselves occupying the objects and scale definitely helps.

## Conclusion

The *Maturity Playground* combines art and play and gives visitors an opportunity to participate. Playground components are objects of cultural significance used as sculptural material in order to present a situation that offers a dialogue between play and social tension. The works can form relationships of trust, relations of distance, and can propose psychological and social behavior associated with the activity of the object. Situated within the contemporary art context of relational form, my work invites people to experience play with the objects used in the sculptures and allows them to involve themselves in a physical way within the art environment. An active physical engagement with the work was an issue that Allan Kaprow saw as an essential choice to be made by the visitor and encouraged by the artist. Kaprow was pushing and striving for life to meld into sculpture and sculpture into life so that the public would not feel reserved in an art setting but would freely and actively interact with the art. The *Maturity Playground* has been based on such aspirations and a desire to bring them into a specific situation. Incorporating play into art will not only continue where Kaprow's ideas left us, it will push these foundations further through the merging of tension and participation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Allan Kaprow and Jeff Kelley. Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 1-9. "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" was first published in *Art News* 57 no. 6: 24-26, 55-57, in 1958. The following excerpt from his manifesto is the statement that effectively changed my practice to sculpture: "Pollock, as I see him, left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street. Not satisfied with the suggestion through paint of our other senses, we shall utilize the specific substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch. Objects of every sort are materials for the new art: paint, chairs, food, electric and neon lights, smoke, water, old socks, a dog, movies, a thousand other things that will be discovered by the present generation of artists. Not only will these bold creators show us, as if for the first time, the world we have always had about us but ignored, but they will disclose entirely unheard-of happenings and events, found in garbage cans, police files, hotel lobbies; seen in store windows and on streets; and sensed in dreams and horrible accidents. An odor of crushed strawberries, a letter from a friend, or a billboard selling Drano; three taps on the front door, a scratch, a sigh, or a voice lecturing endlessly, a blinding staccato flash, a bowler hat- all will become materials for this new concrete art." (7-9).

<sup>2</sup> Amelia Jones, "Rupture," Parachute no. 123 July/Aug/Sept 2006: 34.

<sup>3</sup> Morgan Falconer, "Vito Acconci," Art World issue 5 June July 2008: 143.

<sup>4</sup> Alastair Cooke interviewing Richard Serra, Richard Serra: Sculpture, Gagosian gallery, London, exh. cat. video Oct 4–Dec 20 2008, Oct. 30 2008 < <http://www.gagosian.com/exhibitions/britannia-street-2008-10-richard-serra/>>.

<sup>5</sup> Clare Cooper Marcus, Clare Miller Watsky, Elliot Insley and Carolyn Francis, "Neighborhood Parks", People Places : Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space. 2nd ed ed. Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1998) 69-70.

<sup>6</sup> Marcus, Watsky, Insley, Francis 70.

<sup>7</sup> Susan G. Solomon, American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space (Hanover [N.H.]: University Press of New England, 2005) 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> Solomon 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> Solomon 27-29.

<sup>10</sup> Solomon 29.

<sup>11</sup> Solomon 33. This was a view primarily promoted by the art critic Aline Saarinen in 1954.

<sup>12</sup> Solomon 64-65.

<sup>13</sup> Carsten Höller's *Test Site* was an installation of large spiraling slides in the Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern in London England from October 10 2006 to April 15 2007. Given a protective bag to place around their feet, visitors were permitted to slide.

<sup>14</sup> Lyla Rye's show, *Topsy-Turvy* at *Harbourfront Center* in Toronto features wooden stairs, a slide, a rubber mat, a hammock, rope ladders and a video of an upside down animated geodesic playground structure with music. People were invited to interact. The exhibition dates for the show were from March 14 to May 3 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Carla Zaccagnini presented playground equipment in a park for the 2008 *Bienal de Sao Paulo*. Her work was called *Variable Effect Chain Reaction* of which the playground structures only came to life when 2 or more people activated them. Eduardo Aquino discusses her work in the 2009 February issue of *Border Crossings* art magazine on p. 48-49.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Groos, The Play of Man (New York: Arno Press, 1976) 121.

- <sup>17</sup> Groos 254-268.
- <sup>18</sup> Groos 352.
- <sup>19</sup> Groos 395-398.
- <sup>20</sup> Johan Huizinga, HOMO LUDENS: A Study of the Play Element in Culture, (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955) forward.
- <sup>21</sup> Huizinga 8-9.
- <sup>22</sup> Huizinga 10.
- <sup>23</sup> John Newson, Toys and Playthings in Development and Remediation, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979) 16-17.
- <sup>24</sup> Morgan Falconer, "Vito Acconci," Art World issue 5 June July 2008: 142-143.
- <sup>25</sup> Carsten Höller's *Air de Paris* gallery website includes images of works and descriptions, 2008 < <http://www.airdeparis.com/holler.htm> >.
- <sup>26</sup> Jeff Kelley, Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 52. What is also important to mention here is that the artist is giving people a decision to make and Kelley discusses this in the book with regards to Kaprow's piece 'The Apple Shrine' (1960), where people were presented with a choice of choosing natural or artificial apples in a cramped environment and whether or not they felt like participating by touching and tasting the objects in the work: "At the core of this choice between real and fake apples was a delicious metaphor of the relation of truth to appearances, originals to copies, pleasure to abstinence, and body to mind. Bite by bite, the metaphor whetted the appetite, echoing back through origin myths and philosophical parables, and clashing unceremoniously with modern aesthetics prohibitions ("don't touch!") and formalist critical values about art as an elite optical experience. More important, to eat the apple was literally to embody the metaphor- to 'know' its meanings in a direct, physical way, in and as the body, not just through the mind's eye. This was a moment of truth for Kaprow. When the first apple was eaten, a new era of participation emerged in his work. In this and subsequent works, invitees chose whether or not to perform ordinary physical tasks that were also 'good metaphors' whose meanings were drawn from the arts, history, myth, philosophy, and the sociology of modern culture." (54).
- <sup>27</sup> Christina Ritchie, "A Philosophical Moment" Daniel Olson: Small World, Christina Ritchie and Martin John Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge Galleries, 2000) 37.
- <sup>28</sup> Art 21: Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, series 2, features the Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco and his "game based sculptures" 2003, 2007 < <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/orozco/clip1.html> >.
- <sup>29</sup> *Maturity Correlation* participants, The Junction Arts Festival and Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, Toronto, Canada, September and October 2008.
- <sup>30</sup> Dorothea von Hantelmann, "I" Carsten Höller: Test Site, exh. cat., London, Tate Modern 2006: 29.
- <sup>31</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1986) 196-219. Discussion on the index was first published in *October* 1 (Spring 1976) and *October* 3 (Spring 1977).
- <sup>32</sup> Krauss 198-206.
- <sup>33</sup> Krauss 212.
- <sup>34</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics (Dijon, France: Les Presses du Reel, 2002) 25- 48.
- <sup>35</sup> Groos 296.
- <sup>36</sup> Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," October 110 Fall 2004: 79.

<sup>37</sup> Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," Artforum v. 44 February 2006: 180.

<sup>38</sup> Rustom Bharucha, "The limits of the Beyond: contemporary Art Practice, Intervention, and Collaboration in Public Spaces," Third Text v. 21 issue 4 July 2007: 414.

<sup>39</sup> Bharucha 411.

<sup>40</sup> Gelitin presented a roller coaster ride called "Otto Volante" at Galeria Massimo De Carlo in Milano, Italy in 2004.

<sup>42</sup> John Kormeling's Ferris wheel at the Power Plant in Toronto dated from 19 June-6 September 2004. 2004, 2008 < [http://www.thepowerplant.org/exhibitions/Summer\\_04\\_Korm/info.htm](http://www.thepowerplant.org/exhibitions/Summer_04_Korm/info.htm) >.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Lind, "The Flexible, The Temporary, The Playful," Michael Beutler PECAFIL, ed. Nicolaus Schafhausen and Katja Schtoeder (New York: Lukas and Sternberg, 2006) 19-20.

<sup>43</sup> Ariane Muller, "The Ceiling is the Sky," Michael Beutler PECAFIL, ed. Nicolaus Schafhausen and Katja Schtoeder (New York: Lukas and Sternberg, 2006) 18.

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Illustrations



1 *Maturity Bend*, 2007. Metal.





2 *Maturity Bend.* Interaction.



3 *Maturity Correlation*, 2008. Swing seats, chains, clasps, metal.



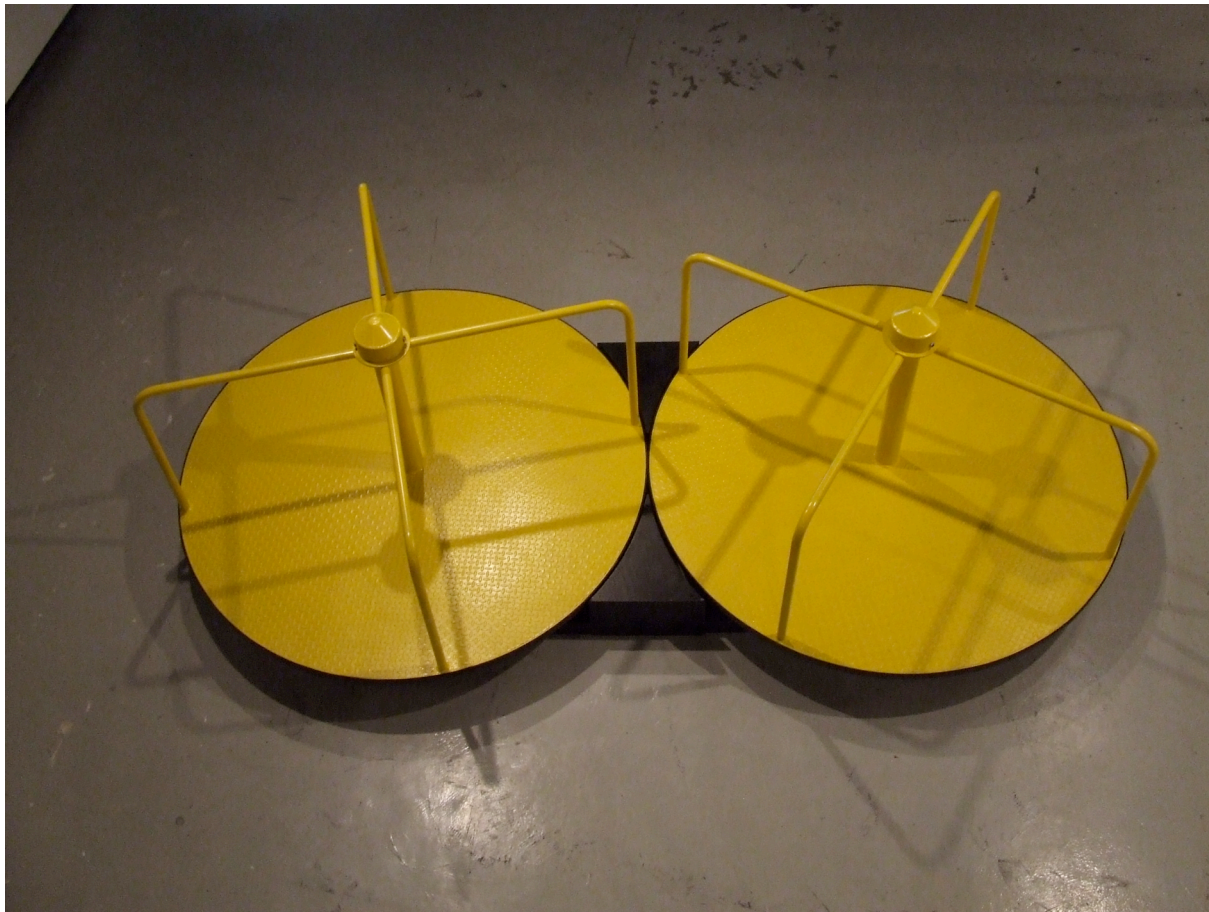
4 *Maturity Correlation.* Interaction.



5 *Maturity Reach*, 2008. Trampolines, ladder, mat, helmets.



6 *Maturity Reach.* Interaction.



7 *Maturity Spin*, 2009. Merry-go-rounds, metal, wood, rubber.



8 *Maturity Spin*. Interaction.