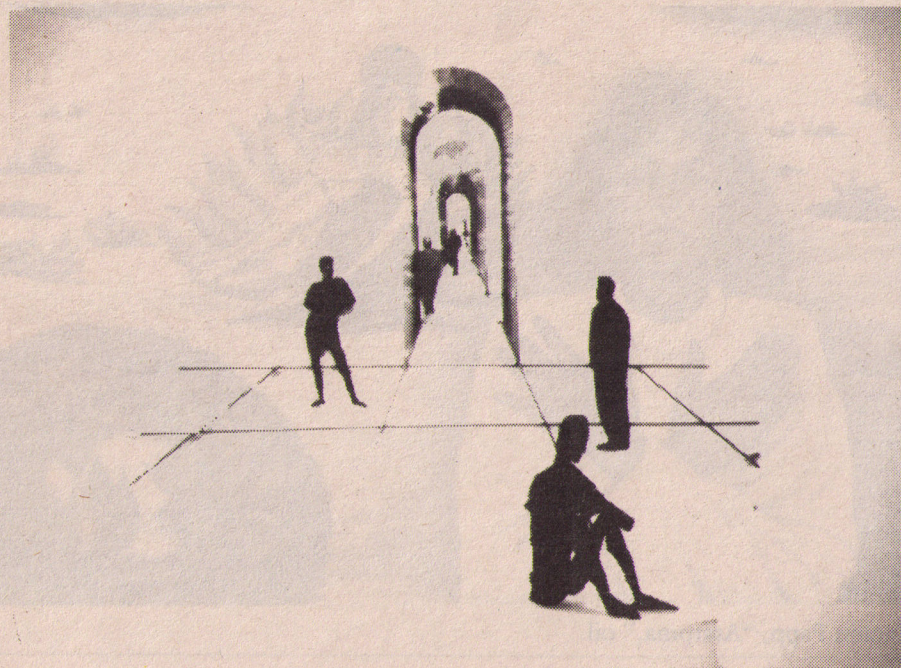


Chris-Pierre Labüsch: A dynamic duo from Switzerland

Jorge Santiago

Artist teams are a relatively recent phenomenon that has come to the forefront through the pioneering efforts of duos such as Gilbert and George, Komar and Melamid, and the Starn Twins. What these well known teams have done for painting, photography, and conceptual art, the Swiss artists Christoph Landolt and Peter Büschlen, who work jointly as Chris-Pierre Labüsch, do for sculpture in their exciting exhibition, "Hands Across the Ocean," at Cast Iron Gallery, 159 Mercer Street, through August 25. Christoph Landolt and Peter Büschlen were both skilled machine mechanics working for the same company in Switzerland when they met in 1986. In 1990, they decided to team up as artists under their joint name, choosing metal sculpture quite naturally as a result of their vocational skills. In the years since, they have participated in many important European exhibitions and garnered considerable critical acclaim.



Chris-Pierre Labüsch, in the forefront, "Observer;" in the background, "Philosopher," steel, Cast Iron Gallery

In their show at Cast Iron Gallery, the team explores positive and negative space in several figurative and abstract

sculptures created in their unique "gas cutting" technique. One of the most impressive aspects of their work is their

exploration of illusionistic space, as well as actual space. Their use of illusionistic perspective is particularly striking in wall pieces such as "Observer" and "Colonnade," where silhouetted figures are combined with linear elements created with steel rods.

Figurative themes are also explored in pieces such as "Liberty," where the outline of the Statue of Liberty is juxtaposed with the New York skyline and cutouts symbolizing the two artists, as well as free standing sculptures, such as "Thought" and "Philosopher," where figures are created in negative or positive space. Although their figurative pieces deal, at times, with conflict between the sexes and other social issues, their general point of view is overwhelmingly cheerful and positive.

Also, including abstract sculptures, such as the minimalistic "Mirror," this outstanding exhibition makes clear that Chris-Pierre Labüsch, the dynamic duo from Switzerland, is the premier artist team working in the medium of sculpture.