

**Robert Wilson**

PAULA COOPER

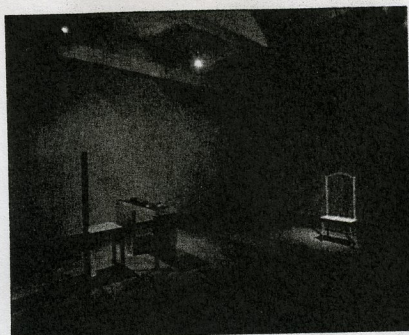
For 30 years, Robert Wilson has been bringing his uncommon vision to the stage, creating a body of work that encompasses set design, lighting, props, furniture, and movement.

Wilson's theater begins and ends with the simplest piece of furniture: the chair. No one who saw his masterpiece *Einstein on the Beach* can forget how the actors sat on slanted chairs, staring back at the seated audience for hours. In Wilson's interpretation of August Strindberg's *Dream Play*, performed this winter at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a chair became a ladder, a shelter, a picture frame, even a periscope.

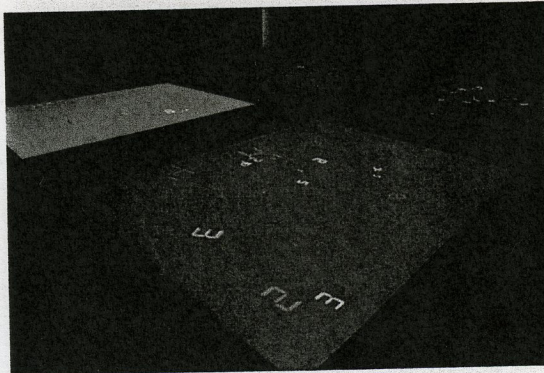
For each of his theater works, he redesigned the chair as an art object, and a wonderful array of these richly expressive creations from recent productions was shown at Paula Cooper. *Hanging Chair* from *White Raven* (1998) is quintessential Wilson—a delicate beech-wood model suspended

in space, its towering ladder back aspiring heavenward. More concrete, but equally surreal, is the pair created for *The Days Before* (1999): *Queen's Chair*, an oval of dark green lacquered wood, which confronts *Father's Chair*, an impossibly uninhabitable carved-oak throne. For pure theater (even without performers), the steel geometric construction *A Chair and a Table for an Author* (1998) presents a cold vision of a writer's desk humanized by exotic lilies floating in water across its surface. Unlike much of Wilson's work, which can be frustratingly cool, the bloodred flowers hint at the passion lurking in the heart of his projects.

—Barbara Pollack



Robert Wilson, *A Chair and a Table for an Author* (left), 1998, brushed aluminum. *W.O.R. Chair* (right), 1998, metal and wood. Installation view. Paula Cooper.



Tatsuo Miyajima, *Floating Time*, 2000, computer graphics, projector, wooden platform, 160" x 120". Lühring Augustine.

video work in which three attractive, neatly dressed actors count in Spanish, French, and English while periodically dunking their faces into bowls of blood-evoking red wine. The piece, projected on three billboard-size screens, seemed like a bizarre, self-conscious Benetton ad and unfortunately lacked the wit or irony of Miyajima's other work.

The third installation—the most subtle and moving of the group—was *Counter Spiral (Red and Green)* (2000), consisting of two helical sculptures, covered with Miyajima's signature, blinking numerical LED displays that count from one through nine (but never include zero, which, Miyajima believes, symbolizes death) at varying speeds. Presented in a nearly pitch-black room, the DNA-like double helix—here separated rather than entwined—reminded us of how our own identities, defined, in essence, by a code, remain thankfully mysterious no matter how close we come to cracking that code.

—Reena Jana

**Dona Nelson**

CHEIM & READ

Dona Nelson's recent series "Twelve Stations of the Subway" is a wry allusion to Barnett Newman's "Station of the Cross" from the 1960s (as well as, one assumes, to the phrase's meaning in Christian iconography). But these buoyant and impressive paintings invoke other sources,

too—Pollock's pours and drips, Minimalism's austere grid, and Mondrian's high-keyed palette from his later works.

Nelson's series dates from 1997 to 1999, and all the paintings are the same imposing size, 90 by 60 inches. Commonplace city sights are implied. In *Named* (1997), for example, a huge triangular wedge

of white against a deep blue ground summons up the ghostly beam of a streetlight. The glossy primary colors of *Holiday* recall Mondrian's homage to Times Square, *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, while at the same time suggesting a street map run through the shredder, then hastily reassembled. In *High Lounge* (1998), a cerulean blue skyscraper shape is caught between purple and white ripples against a gridded background. But Nelson's favorite forms—clusters of circles, often rendered in thick, creamy enamel—seem to have nothing to do with cities or subways at all. As in *The Deep* (1997), they suggest, rather, some kind of burbling, underwater experience.

But it's best not to get bogged down in looking for the urban referents in these handsome and exuberant works. With "The Stations of the Subway," Nelson has achieved a marriage of geometry and spontaneity that's as pleasing as it is tough-minded.

—Ann Landi

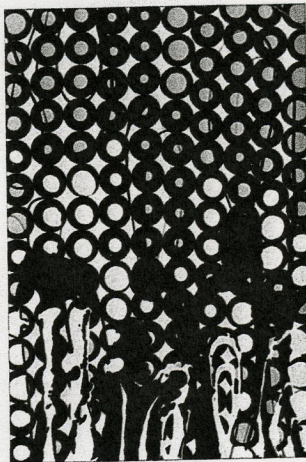
**Tatsuo Miyajima**

LUHRING AUGUSTINE

Known for his use of light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, the glowing illuminated displays on digital clocks, Japanese-born artist Tatsuo Miyajima here dared to branch out into various different media.

The fascinating *Floating Time* (2000), for example, is a playful installation featuring four platforms on the floor of the main gallery. The platforms changed colors, deepening and fading, thanks to a projector that cast intense shades of red, orange, and blue onto them. Projected numerals glided and twirled across the platforms' surfaces like skaters on ice, while visitors were encouraged to walk among them. The result: a whimsical yet contemplative piece that set numbers free from their usual factual rigidity—and liberated the artist's "canvas" from its conventionally static context as well.

Less successful was *Counter Voice in Wine* (2000), a



Dona Nelson, *Wheels*, 1997, latex enamel on canvas, 90" x 60". Cheim & Read.