



September 11 - October 22, 1999

Primary Source, an exhibition on view at the University Gallery, University of Massachusetts Amherst from September 11 through October 22, features the work of Roger Acliding, Dove Bradshaw, and Sandy Gellis in which the artist allows the natural element and/or process to become the ultimate cause of the object's fabrication.

Largely relinquishing human intervention and choice as determining factors in the work's creation, the artist adopts the intriguing role of catalyst or conduit, a role which foregrounds the process as a collaborating entity. Neither symbol nor representation, the work is not about nor of nor like: It simply is the element/process by virtue of reflexive consequence. Absorbed by a meditative state, Roger Ackling turns himself into a clock as he utilizes the sun's rays to burn series of horizontal lines into the driftwood debris that he finds on various beaches in different parts of the world. Dove Bradshaw has produced numerous bodies of work since the 1970s in which she collaborates with the flux and accompanying chance effects of natural processes inherent to mineral and chemical combinations. As in the previous two artists' work, time and chance, patience and acceptance are components of Sandy Gellis's NYC Rainfall: 1987, 1987-88, where the artist set brass plates outside of her loft window each day for one year. She then printed the plates to have the corresponding "imagery" reveal the degree of rainfall: days of heavy or steady precipitation resulted in washes of dark brown while only a few marks would be recorded by a light rainfall. The plates are presented as a calendar-like wall installation and the prints, housed in their portfolio, bear the quality of an intimate journal. What is common to these artists is the significance of their approach in stepping back from a situation with detached awareness in order to set free the gestural mark of their chosen source--fire, earth, water--allowing that mark to define its origin.