

ARTFORUM

JANUARY 1973, VOL. 11, NO. 5

Alice Adams

55 MERCER GALLERY

Alice Adams uses the same kinds of materials as Gordon Matta-Clark. She uses them traditionally, which makes for a nice contrast between her constructed sculptures and his "found" ones. Adams' three freestanding works and one wall relief utilize plaster of Paris, wood and wire lath, all of which are practically obsolete building materials in our time of wallboard and exposed brick. She trowels her plaster onto the lath like stucco, giving it a rough texture. Sometimes the wood-lath slats are spaced as if for plastering; at other times she abuts them. In either case they have a sun-screen appearance. This look, plus the golden warmth of her natural wood and the clean white of her plaster of Paris gives the work a Mediterranean feel. This results in a sensation of "otherness" in the work which clearly separates it from Gordon Matta-Clark's emphasis on contiguity with reality. Adams' relief in plaster, wood and metal diamond lath, built as it is right into the gallery wall, comes closest to being confused with its setting. Its awkward shaping contrasts with the graceful rhythms of her freestanding works. This seems to have been part of her solution to the problem of how to make visible distinctions between the work and the wall. Another part of the solution was to leave two of the four edges of the horizontal rectangle of lath uncovered by plaster, and to put a disconnected piece of wood lath below the lower right corner of the work like a signature. The relief, like the sculpture, explores notions of inside and outside, front and back, open and closed in a very straightforward way.

—April Kingsley