

**Peter Reginato at
Adelson/William
Beadleston**

The artist's Q&A in Peter Reginato's exhibition catalogue

reveals him as an optimist who has a clear grasp of the formal properties of his sculpture but perhaps is less self-aware regarding tone. He speaks of an expressionist quality and says that a piece called *Self-Portrait* includes "teeth" because there's "a lot of anger" in it. But Reginato's sculpture looks about as expressionist as Calder's mobiles.

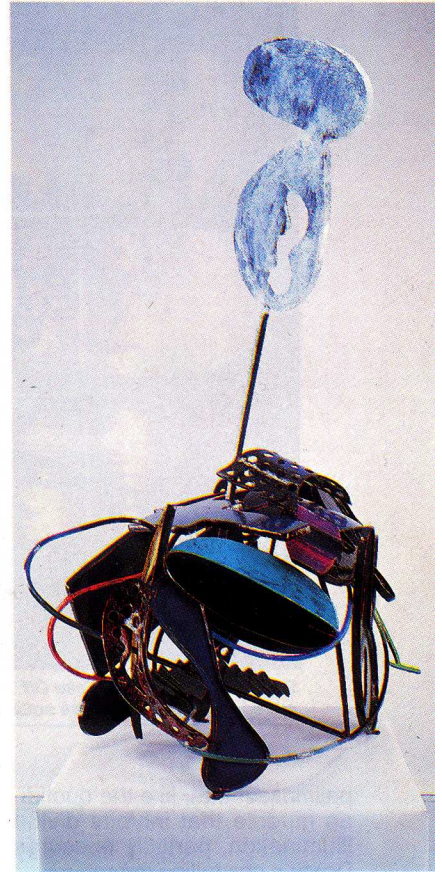
These painted-steel assemblies often seem to disregard gravity or to explode into the space they occupy. Their generous scale, exuberant color, open structure and collage of shallow-relief shapes are, almost without exception, cheerful and energetic. Fortunately, the works come across as a breath of fresh air rather than a spoonful of sugar, their fly-away charm anchored to earth by the ambition that's evident in their size and complexity and by the looseness with which they are painted.

The dozen sculptures that were on view range from about 2 to 9 feet tall. They are made up of a standard vocabulary of forms, some of which Reginato has named: pod, boat, whirligig, watermelon. He notes that these new sculptures differ from the works in his last show primarily in being denser and involving some experiments with color. He leans to bright hues, often with a gloss that magnifies the vividness. Red, orange and yellow are set off with some blue-green in the aptly named *Happy Happy Joy Joy*, and blues and greens are enlivened with hot colors in *Tristan*. But the exceptions are interesting. In *False Surrender*, for example, the colors are whited out, as if his usual palette were being seen through fog or snow. This

work also has a more descriptive form than the others: two "surrender flags" emerge from a spherical congeries that suggests a cloud of dust or the cartoon convention of whirling objects that represents a fight.

A small piece called *You*, hung on the wall over the reception desk, is also a formal novelty, though it's a local variation, not a new species. Here the square rods that usually provide a scaffolding for the cutout shapes seem to break free and describe scribbles in the air. The implication of abandon is endorsed by the rods' inexplicable color change: they shift, mid-loop, from red to pink to blue as if they were going through some thermal transmutation. *Greene Street* is the most expansive of the works, with two long horizontal elements that reach over 12 feet from end to end. Reginato's sculptural daring here, in mounting some of his larger rounded shapes at the far ends of those elements, has the unexpected result of making the open composition look like an abstract painting, less subject to considerations of gravity or tensile strength than we expect sculpture to be. In this surprising climax one can see Reginato as a painter with a very idiosyncratic canvas.

—Janet Koplos



Peter Reginato: *Surrender*, 1993, painted steel, 60 by 41 by 28 inches; at Adelson/William Beadleston.