

PETER REGINATO



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Recent Sculpture

May 7 - May 30, 1992

Reception for the artist
Thursday evening, May 7, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Presented by
Adelson Galleries, Inc. and William Beadleston, Inc.

EXHIBITION SPACE
112 Greene Street, New York, New York 10012
212 966 - 3864

It gives us great pleasure to present the recent sculpture of Peter Reginato. It may seem unusual for two galleries rooted in the tradition of 19th and early 20th century art to exhibit a contemporary sculptor; to us, however, the decision to show Peter's work was both logical and challenging.

Those who write about Reginato's work frequently cite his knowledge of and connection to art history, particularly that of the twentieth century. This is, for us, a critical aspect of his work, one which helps bridge the gap between past and present.

More important, however, is our regard for Reginato's art. We each began admiring his sculpture several years ago and have collected works for our homes. It is telling for us that these pieces work well not only in a gallery space, but surrounded by the snow-covered Rockies or against the backdrop of the Hudson River. It is our hope that these sculptures will bring as many moments of enjoyment to the viewer as they have for us.

Warren Adelson

William Beadleston

All works in this catalogue are steel painted with Insi-tron and are suitable for both indoor and outdoor display.

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PETER REGINATO: IMPROVISATIONS

"You can borrow a lot of things," says Peter Reginato, "and you can fake a lot of things. But one thing you can't fake is drawing." For an artist who has devoted most of his creative life to sculpture, he's oddly insistent on this point. And he doesn't mean drawing for sculpture, made before the fact to test out the idea; nor drawing of sculpture, made after the fact to document or memorialize it. Reginato understands drawing rather as a vital part of the process of sculpture. He sees it as the true, spontaneous means of invention, a way of creating powerfully individual form.

It's not surprising, then, to find this artist readily critical of what he calls the "neutralization" of drawing by a generation of minimalists who substituted for it the ideal of reductive, geometric form; and of the host of modernist and post modern artists for whom this basic task has been superseded by the ubiquitous found object, or by the techniques of photo-based borrowings and appropriations. The shapes he himself uses, Reginato insists, originate in the simple and spontaneous act of making marks on metal.

Seen now from the perspective of the 1990s, this refusal to "fake it" represents a refreshing reversal, after decades in which critically self-conscious and often socially-directed irony has dominated artists' work, as well as our ways of looking at it. And the authenticity we sense in Reginato's work as a result is not that angst- and ego-ridden authenticity of the post-Sartrean, existentialist Abstract Expressionism of the fifties, but a vital and spontaneous outburst of idiosyncratic form and color. Massive as it is in some of its larger manifestations, Reginato's work never fails to impress us as an act of marvelous prestidigitation, a dazzling juggler's act of shapes and colors in which quarter-inch steel becomes magically lighter than air.

In short, there's nothing cool or correct about this work. Consider its basic elements — the shapes Reginato invents out of the flanks of curved steel pipes and the flat plates which are the raw material for his torch. Quite apart from their hand-drawn origins of which he makes so much, many of them flout the canons of modernism with multiple referential values. With blithe indifference to natural scale or any other logical relationships, Reginato baits the observing mind off on side-trips into widely disparate realms of experience: pods, petals, leaves, and flowers have a biomorphic presence, for example; hints of doors, domes, and windows evoke the domain of architecture while stylized whirligigs, boats and wrenches suggest such human artifacts as toys and tools.

If this diversity of shapes has an inner coherence, it is perhaps in a common heritage from the exuberant, somewhat zany design and architectural forms of the inventive fifties — and it is not insignificant, surely, that one of Reginato's passions as a collector is for the furniture and clocks of this period. Unlike the high seriousness, the expressive bravado, and the psychological introspection which characterize the visual arts of the time, these utilitarian artifacts remained curiously clean

in line, optimistic, even utopian. Their practitioners were clearly looking back to the playful formal inventiveness of a Matisse, a Miró, or an Arp, and expressing a sometimes almost perverse joy in sheer surprise, originality, and decorative excess. Unashamed of bold, primary color, of pure sensual pleasure, of simple humor, or of stylization, they generated a myriad of forms which quickly went out of style and were despised for decades for their quirky artificiality.

Yet for all its evident fascination with the period, Reginato's work is not a validation of fifties design nor an appropriation of its forms, for his shapes inevitably yield to structure. And here again, we find nothing cool, nothing distant in the way he works. On the contrary, we sense that his structures are designed specifically to stimulate our amazement. Working always from the ground up, he uses both the shapes themselves and the elegantly branching lines of steel rods (he calls them "wires" —a high-wire act, perhaps) as structural means of cantilevering the weight of his components up and out in a breathtaking defiance of the eye's expectations of gravity.

And with Reginato, it is not simply a matter of sheer mass and weight and the challenge they offer to the physical laws which govern our experience: it's also his ability to make these heavy objects not merely stay in space, but dance there for us. Confronted by their disorienting interplay between balance and imbalance, we slip easily into the sense that we must ourselves become a part of the support system in order to maintain the needed equilibrium. By the same token, we are engaged in the artist's improvisational purpose, since our eye is set in constant motion not only by the visual strategy of the work, but by our own movement in relation to it.

Beyond their formal complexity, Reginato's structures are also disconcertingly anthropomorphic — another offense, of course, against modernist dogma. Aside from the distinct, often quirky "personalities" which they invariably suggest, many of his sculptures have the air of curious robots, sent to test our earth's atmosphere from some distant planet where life-forms, though similar to ours, have combined humanoid with biomorphic and non-organic matter. (Here again, it's surely no coincidence that Reginato's collector's eye attracts him to toy robots and space-ships from the 1950s and 1960s. They line the shelves in an eye-popping, museum-like display in the anteroom to his studio — across from the hundreds of lunch boxes embellished with comic-book superheroes and icons of the early television age. His vital imagination feeds on images, as well as spawning them.)

Reginato's use of paint fits right in with the logic of his structures. Brushy and gloppy, spattered and dripping, it gathers here and there in puddles, and colors merge into each other with no particular rhyme or reason. If one of their functions is to lighten up the structure, another is to constantly surprise. Their changes intrude suddenly, breaking the rhythm, for example, of the long curve of a connecting "wire." And as we move into and around the sculpture, edges and corners yield everywhere to witty syncopations and odd juxtapositions, and structural windows open up to reveal a subtle rhyme here, a raucous contrast there.

Above all, the colors keep us constantly alert to structural changes. The closest analogy for a Reginato sculpture is a jazz composition — particularly now, perhaps, that he has taken to introducing a dominant primary color to determine the overall tonality of the larger works. (Showing them as yet untitled in the studio, the artist was recently referring to them as "The Red Piece," "The Blue Piece," "The Yellow Piece.") Here, color works as theme and structure as riff, with improvisational variations carrying the line of thought. The rest, as in jazz, is virtuosity. Everything depends on change, for it is the modulations of form, structure, and color, of positive and negative space form, that create the peculiar beauty and intricacy of the work.

All the wit and sparkle and virtuosity of jazz, however, would seem shallow without its abiding roots in the blues. And by the same token, beyond the formal exuberance of Reginato's work lies another, more disturbing quality, which suggests the obverse of the playful, decorative coin in which he deals. It's a kind of baroque flirtation with excess, with the overblown blossom, the dark side of the beautiful: the juggler's dazzling act would not entrance us were it not for its close encounter with disaster; behind the comical robot lurks the golem, the friendly servant-machine gone berserk and seizing power; and the blooms that are heaviest with beauty are the deadly nightshade and the Venus flytrap whose threat some of these shapes recall.

Like the work of those baroque word-mongers whose virtuoso and intricate conceits the modernists dubbed "metaphysical," Reginato's sculptures celebrate the delights of the sensual world in the same breath as they evoke its dangers, and with however light a touch, they always carry with them the intimation of entropy and decay. Beyond the task which they perform with such graceful and pleasurable ease — to delight the eye — it is their quality, finally, which assures them the complex and deeply human substance that challenges the mind. This, too, is something that can't be faked.

Peter Clothier
February 1, 1992
Los Angeles

1. *Blue Bottom Base*, 1992, 68 x 47 x 39 inches



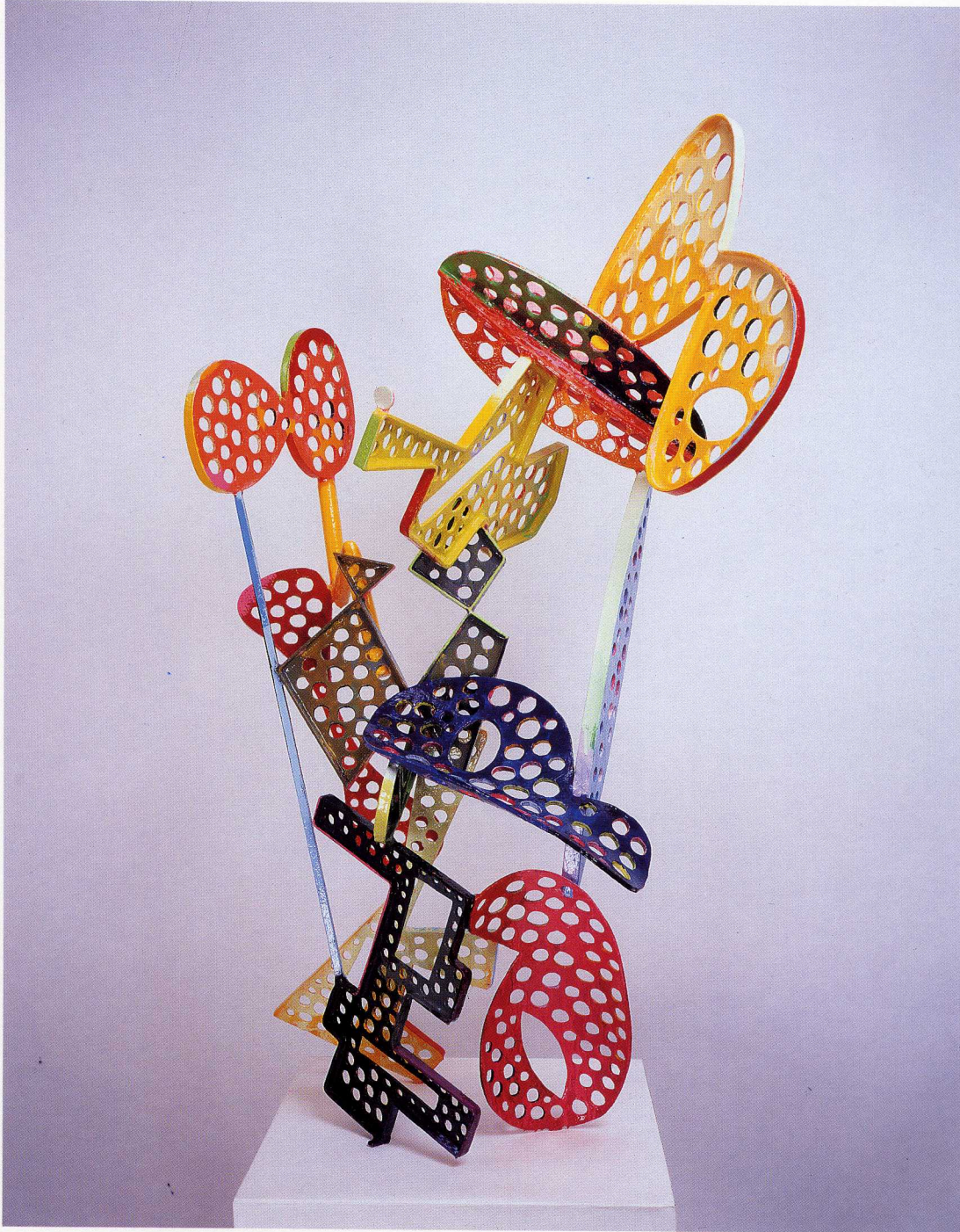


2. *Tulip Head (X70)*, 1991,
85 x 26 x 39 inches

3. *Francesca Ballerina*, 1992, 64 x 54 x 43 inches



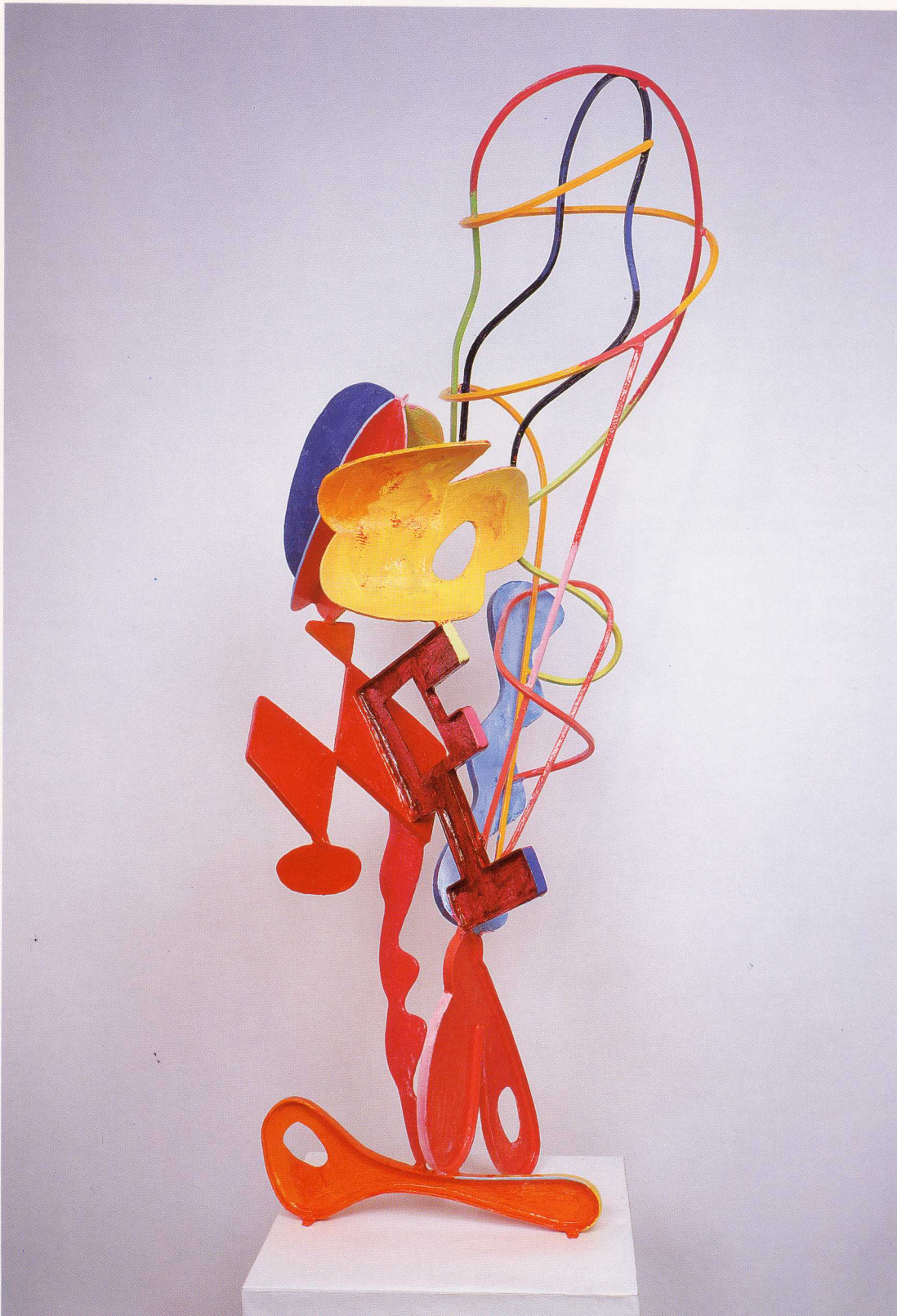
4. *The Whole Story*, 1992, 60 x 36 x 23 inches





5. *Beyond the Blue*, 1991, 126 x 97 x 66 inches

6. *Red Smoke*, 1992, 75 x 31 x 21 inches





7. *Big Jeep*, 1991, 117 x 56 x 56 inches



8. *Chrome Dome*, 1991, 101 x 66 x 50 inches

CHRONOLOGY

- 1945 Born in Dallas, Texas
1963-66 Studied at San Francisco Art Institute
1971-73 Taught at Hunter College, New York

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1971 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, (January and November) New York
1973 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York
University of Rhode Island, Providence
1974 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, Houston
Allen Center, Houston
1975 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York
B. R. Kornblatt Gallery, Baltimore
1976 B. R. Kornblatt Gallery, Baltimore
1977 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York
1978 Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Watson/de Nagy, Houston
1979 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, Houston
1980 Watson-Willour & Co., Houston
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York
Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, Houston
Watson/de Nagy, Houston
1981 Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York
Medici-Berenson Gallery, Bay Harbor Islands,
Florida
1982 Sarah Rentschler Gallery, Bridgehampton,
New York
1983 New Jersey State Council on the Arts,
Architectural Monumental Sculpture
Series, Union
Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York
Medici-Berenson Gallery, Bay Harbor Islands,
Florida
1984 Watson/de Nagy, Houston
1985 Patricia Hamilton, 112 Greene Street,
New York
1986 Patricia Hamilton, 57th Street West Gallery,
Los Angeles
1987 Patricia Hamilton, 112 Greene Street,
New York
1988 The Brunner Gallery and Museum, *Five Year
Survey: Peter Bergin*, Iowa State
University, Ames
Patricia Hamilton, River North Concourse
Building, Chicago
1989 Patricia Hamilton, 112 Greene Street,
New York
1990 Patricia Hamilton, Santa Monica

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1967 Park Place Gallery, *2nd Annual Invitational*,
New York
1969 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, *Group Exhibition*,
New York
1970 Whitney Museum of American Art, *Sculpture
Annual*, New York
1971 Aldrich Museum, *Highlights from the Art
Season*, Ridgefield, Connecticut
University of Maryland Art Gallery, *Wharves:
Happening in Soho*, College Park
1972 Indianapolis Museum of Art, *Sculpture
Invitational*, Indianapolis
Corcoran & Corcoran, *Group Exhibition*,
Coral Gables, Florida
1973 Rhode Island School of Design, *Small Works:
Selections from the Richard Broun Baker
Collection*, Providence
Whitney Museum of American Art, *Biennial*,
New York
1974 The Museum of Fine Arts, *Sculpture*, Houston
Storm King Art Center, *Recent Acquisitions*,
Mountainville, New York
1975 Max Hutchinson's Sculpture Now Gallery,
Group Invitational, New York
Hayward Gallery, *The Condition of Sculpture*,
London
Galerie Ariadne, *Group Exhibition*, New York
Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, *Group
Exhibition*, Roslyn
Waco Creative Arts Center, *Recent
Acquisitions*, Waco, Texas
1976 Gulf Coast Invitational *Sculpture Exhibition*,
Galveston
University of Texas, *Sculpture*, Dallas
1979 Lubin House, *The Collection of Tibor de
Nagy*, Syracuse University Annex,
New York
1980 Medici-Berenson Gallery, *Group Selections*,
Bay Harbor Islands, Florida
1981 Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, *Sculpture*,
New York



Strange Brew, 1968

- 1982 Boston Architectural Center, Berklee College of Music Pavilion, Boston
- 1983 Clayworks, Group Exhibition, New York
Houston Museum of Fine Arts, *Sculpture Selections from the Permanent Collection*, Houston
- 1984 Storm King Art Center, *20th Century Sculpture Selections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Mountainville, New York
Sarah Renschler Gallery, *International*, New York
- 1985 Summit Art Center, *Interplay: Painted Sculptures and Constructions*, Summit, New Jersey
- 1986 Gloria Luria Gallery, *Hunt, Kendrick, Reginato*, Bay Harbor Islands, Florida
Michael Kohn Gallery, *Still Life: Life Still*, Los Angeles
- 1987 Gallery at Hastings on Hudson, *Crossover*, Hastings on Hudson
- 1988 Williams College Museum, *Little Big Sculpture*, Williamstown
- 1989 Gimpel and Weitzenhoffer Gallery, *Sculpture with Color*, New York
Andre Zarre Gallery, *Metal, Wood, Stone*, New York
- 1990 Philadelphia Art Alliance, *The Significant Surface*, Philadelphia
USX Tower, *Steelworks*, Pittsburgh
Academy of the Arts, *30 Years and Growing*, Easton, Maryland
- 1991 Jaffe Baker Gallery, *Alberto Magnani, Peter Reginato*, Boca Raton
Virginia Museum of Fine Art, *Contemporary Sculpture*, Richmond
Museum of Art, *Peter Reginato and Jane Manos: Two Visions of Abstract Constructed Sculpture*, Fort Lauderdale
Adelson Galleries, Inc., *One Hundred Years of American and European Art*, New York
- 1992 Gloria Luria Gallery, *Meadmore, Perlman, Reginato, Todd: Sculpture for Public and Private Places*, Bay Harbor Islands, Florida

SELECTED ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

- "The Young Life," *Vogue*, January 1969
- Benedict, Michael, *ARTnews*, February 1971, page 24
- Pincus-Witten, Robert, *Artforum*, March 1971, page 62
- Gollin, Jane, *ARTnews*, December 1971, page 19
- Shirey, David, *New York Times*, January 17, 1972
- Canaday, John, *New York Times*, February 17, 1973
- Campbell, Lawrence, *ARTnews*, March 1973, page 75
- Bell, Jane, *Arts*, April 1973, pages 70 and 81
- Butler, Susan L., "Many Firsts Happen to Sculptor Peter Reginato," *Houston Chronicle*, December 5, 1973
- Moser, Charlotte, "The Shape of Sculpture," *Houston Post*, December 23, 1973
- Kramer, Hilton, *New York Times*, March 23, 1974
- Weissman, Julian, "Standoff in Soho," *ARTnews*, November 1974, pages 92-94
- Frackman, Noel, *Arts*, April 1975, page 11
- Hodgson, Moira, "Sculptor Peter Reginato: After the Monument," *Soho Weekly News*, April 24, 1975, cover, and pages 13 and 37-38
- Cork, Richard, "Blackball at the Sculptors Club," *Evening Standard*, May 6, 1975
- Bell, Jane, *Arts*, June 1975, pages 26-27
- Tuchman, Phyllis, *ARTnews*, June 1975, pages 146 and 148
- Siegel, Jeanne, *Art in America*, September-October 1975, pages 102-103
- Kingsley, April, "A Return to Abstract Impressionism?" *Soho Weekly News*, December 4, 1975, page 21
- Kramer, Hilton, *New York Times*, March 18, 1977
- Gold, Sharon, *Artforum*, Summer 1977, page 71
- Crossley, Mimi, *Houston Post*, January 13, 1978
- Frackman, Noel, *Arts*, January 1978
- Forgey, Benjamin, *Washington Star*, May 21, 1978
- Carnean, Jr., E. A., *Arts*, June 1978, page 26
- Gibson, Eric, *Arts International*, May 1979, page 21
- Towle, Tony, *Art in America*, September 1979, page 137



Copper Kettle, 1972



Vertical, 1976

Raynor, Vivian, *New York Times*, July 19, 1980
 Tennant, Donna, "Reginato's Recent Work Like Brush Movements in Air," *Houston Chronicle*, January 24, 1980, page 6
 Crossley, Mimi, *Houston Post*, January 30, 1980, page 8AA
 Raynor, Vivian, *New York Times*, July 19, 1980
 Russell, John, *New York Times*, July 17, 1981
 Monte, James, "Reginato's New Work," *Museum Magazine*, November-December 1981
 Taransky, Valentine, *Arts*, January 1982, page 23
 Jablons, Pamela, "Collecting Within a Tradition," *Diversions*, August 1982, pages 201-208
 Zimmer, William, *New York Times*, February 6, 1983
 Firestone, Evan, "Three Musicians at the Harlequin's Carnival: Peter Reginato's New Sculpture," *Arts*, February 1985, pages 116-119
 Towle, Tony, *Art in America*, September 1985, page 139
 Tuchman, Phyllis, "Sculptures of the Unexpected," Patricia Hamilton, 57th Street West Gallery, 1986
 Tuchman, Phyllis, "The Road Now Taken," *Art Criticism*, May 1986
 Shipper, Meryle, *ARTneus*, May 1986
 Firestone, Evan, "In Praise of Steel: Notes on Some Recent Direct Metal Sculpture," *Arts*, April 1986, page 44
 Van Dam, B. J., "Steel Sculpture at the Greene Street Gallery," *Antiques and the Art Weekly*, March 13, 1987
 Zimmer, William, "Crossover" at the Gallery at Hastings on Hudson," *New York Times*, September 27, 1987
 Cohen, Jean Lawlor, "Sculpture Thrives in Washington Law Firms," *The Washington Lawyer*, January-February 1988, pages 40-48
 Guralnick, Margo, "Timely Obsessions," *House and Garden*, September 1989, pages 94-96
 Story, Jeff, "Art in Park is not Just for a Lark," *Middleton Times-Herald Record*, December 10, 1988

Duvoll, John, "Crystal Run Becomes Home to Works of Soho Sculptor," *Orange County Business Journal*, December 12, 1988
 Ratcliff, Carter, "Reginato's Improvisations," *Art in America*, December 1989, pages 146-151

AWARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- 1973 Allen Art Center, National Sculpture Competition, Houston
 1974 Allen Art Center, Houston
 1976 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship
 1984 National Endowment for the Arts, Sculpture Grant, Washington, D.C.
 1986 Glick Organization, Promenade Building, New York
 1991 The O'Connor Group, Menlo Park Mall, Edison

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Allen Art Center, Houston
 Boston Museum of Fine Arts
 Brown University, Providence
 Bucknell University, Lewisburg
 Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.
 Great Southwest Atlanta Corporation, Atlanta
 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D. C.
 IBM Corporation, White Plains
 Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte
 Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
 Northwestern University, Evanston
 John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota
 Rockford Museum, Rockford
 Storm King Art Center, Mountaintown



Toll Drifter, 1977



Loose Ends, 1978



Tyrone with Chrome Plains, 1983

