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Ronald Bladen

Sculpture

Robert S. Mattison

Foreword by Mark di Suvero

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- The first monograph on a pivotal figure of post-war American art
- A splendidly illustrated volume presenting a comprehensive overview of Bladen's career

The first monograph on a pivotal figure of postwar American art.

Best known for his monumental sculptures, Ronald Bladen (1918–1988) was regarded as an artistic forerunner by such minimalist artists as Donald Judd, Sol Lewitt, and Carl Andre. But in contrast to the matter-of-fact work of these artists, Bladen's sculptures are charged with emotional power. They fill entire rooms, pressing outward against the walls and ceiling; their themes include the force of gravity, the dynamism of planar surfaces, the impact of scale, and confrontation with the viewer.

This splendidly illustrated book presents a comprehensive overview of Bladen's career: his breakthrough works such as *Untitled (Three Elements)*, a standout at the Jewish Museum's legendary *Primary Structures* exhibition of 1966; his monumental outdoor commissions of the late 1960s through the 1980s; and his reflective wall reliefs of 1980s. Bladen's drawings and working models are discussed in detail, and his early career as a painter is considered in the light of his later sculptural oeuvre. Art historian Robert S. Mattison's thoughtful analysis of Bladen's art is informed not only by extensive archival research but also by numerous interviews with Bladen's contemporaries, including fellow artists like Bill Jensen, Alex Katz, and Dorothea Rockburne.

In addition, this volume collects several of the most important critical essays on Bladen, by Irving Sandler, April Kingsley, Bill Berkson, and Naomi Spector. The full scholarly apparatus includes an illustrated chronology of the artist's life and career.

Today, Bladen's works are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, Storm King Art Center, and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, among many others. His grasp of the expressive power of mass and abstract form continues to influence sculptors from Richard Serra to Ursula von Rydingsvard. Here, finally, is a book that reveals and elucidates the full extent of his achievement.

Mark di Suvero, one of America's most celebrated living sculptors, is a recipient of the National Medal of Arts and numerous other honors.

Robert S. Mattison, Marshall R. Metzgar Professor of Art History at Lafayette College, is the author of numerous books, articles, and exhibition catalogues, including *Franz Kline: Coal and Steel, Robert Rauschenberg: Breaking Boundaries, Arshile Gorky: Works,* and *Robert Motherwell: The Formative Years.*

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