

ALAN BELCHER Exhibition

organized by: Wacoal Art Center
 Canadian Embassy
 Government of Ontario Art Collection, in Association with Art
 Metropole, Toronto.
 Great Canada '91 Organizing Committee



supported by: Government of Ontario
 and Ontario House, Tokyo
 technically supported by: FUJIFILM
 technically advised by: Yamamoto Hori Architects

Installation process to be open to public:
 June. 24 ~ June. 26, 1991
 am 11:00 ~ pm 8:00

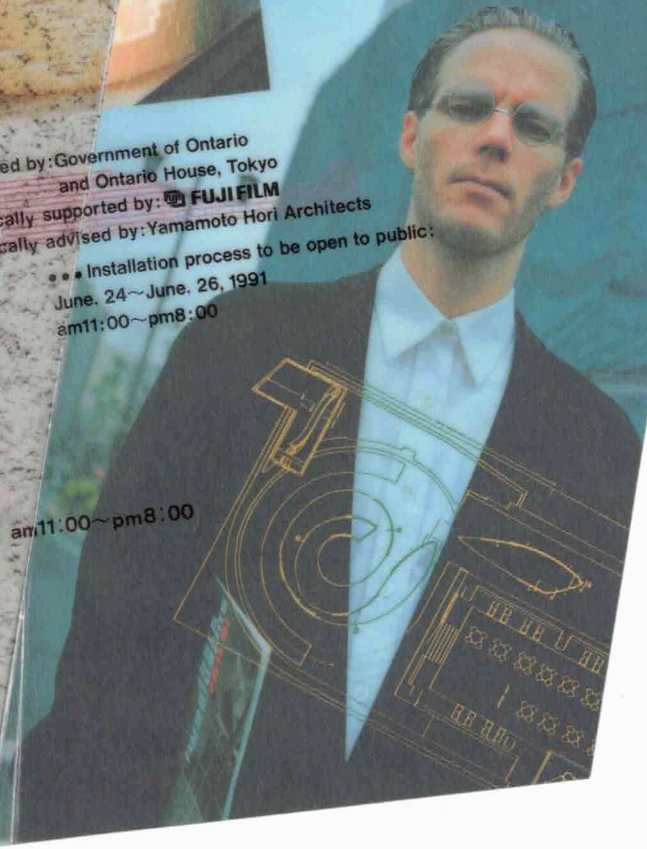
主催: 株式会社ワコアルアートセンター
 カナダ大使館
 カナダ・オンタリオ州政府アートコレクション
 グレート・カナダ '91実行委員会

後援: カナダ政府
 カナダ・オンタリオ州政府東京事務所
 技術協力: 富士写真フイルム株式会社
 山本・堀アーキテクト

公開制作: 1991年6月24日月 ~ 6月26日水 am 11:00 ~ pm 8:00
 会期中無休 入場無料

June. 27 ~ July. 14, 1991
 Spiral Garden am 11:00 ~ pm 8:00

観覧券
 日 100円 木 75円 土 50円
 地下鉄有明駅 都立有明公園
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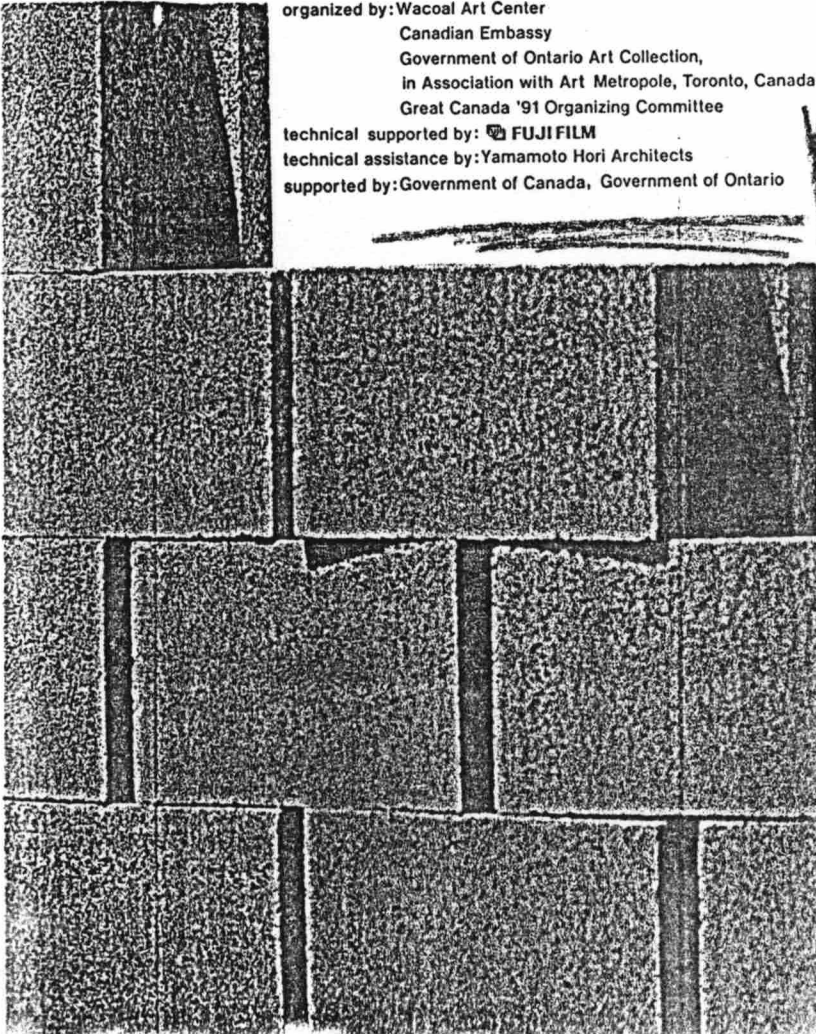


ALAN BELCHER EXHIBITION

Complex '91 TOKYO

June. 27~July. 14, 1991

Spiral Garden



organized by: Wacoal Art Center
Canadian Embassy
Government of Ontario Art Collection,
in Association with Art Metropole, Toronto, Canada
Great Canada '91 Organizing Committee

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supported by: Government of Canada, Government of Ontario

Acknowledgement

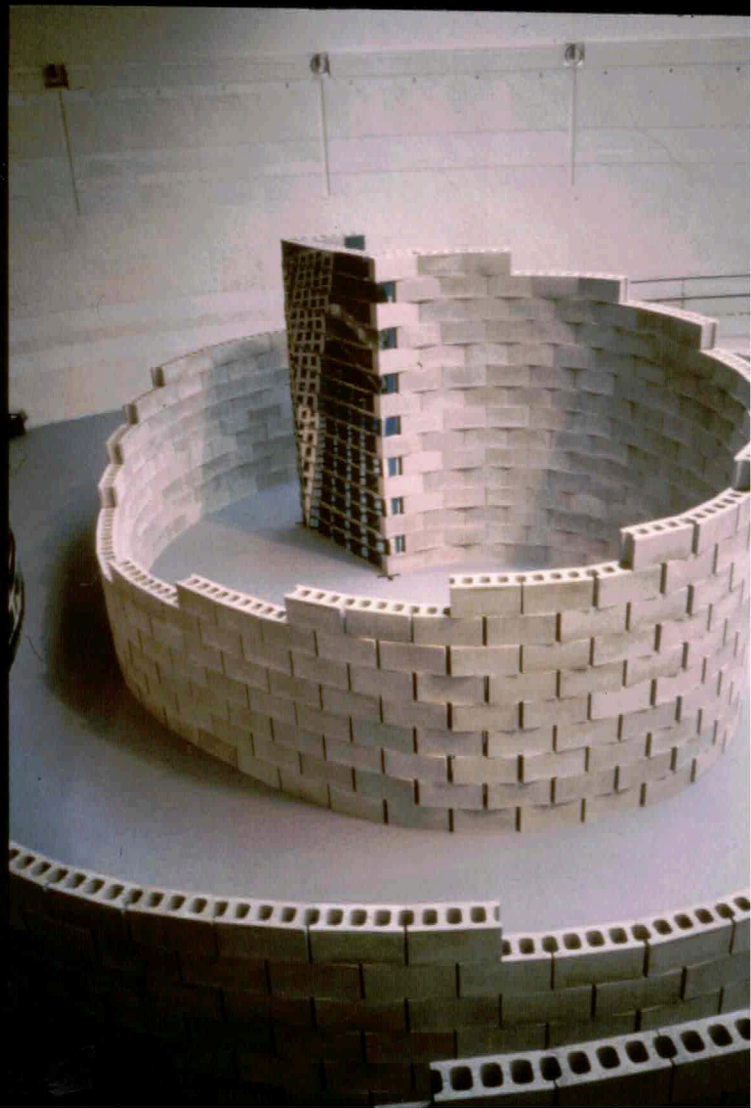
Spiral organized the first exhibition in Japan for Alan Belcher, a young Canadian artist, jointly with the Canadian Embassy, Government of Ontario Art Collection, in association with Art Metropole, Toronto and Great Canada '91 Organizing Committee. Alan Belcher was born in Toronto, the Province of Ontario, Canada in 1957. He presently lives in Cologne, Germany and is actively participating in international art exhibitions. The artist has continued to produce three-dimensional works using photographs. His project for Spiral entitled "Complex '91" is one of his latest works which evolved from the "Condo" series produced since 1987. The work was created and exhibited in Tokyo. Alan Belcher visited Tokyo twice in 18 months for this project and went through detailed study and photographing of buildings under construction. The project was of a grand scale, a structure consisting of close to 2000 concrete blocks bound with photographs and set in the unique space inside Spiral. "Complex '91" has been significant in that it dealt with and was held in the complex city "Tokyo" and that it contributed to international human exchange with the artist visiting Tokyo during the production of the work. It is hoped that this exhibition serves as an opportunity to further enhance cultural exchange between Canada and Japan.

This exhibition was held as a part of "Great Canada '91", a comprehensive cultural activity program introducing contemporary Canada. The organizers extend their deepest appreciation to Yamamoto

Hori Architects for the many advices, FUJI PHOTO FILM CO., LTD, for the cooperation in providing the photographic materials and all of those who helped in making this exhibition a reality.

July 1991
Tetsuji Fujisawa
President,
Wacoal Art Center

主催：株式会社ワコールアートセンター
カナダ大使館
カナダ・オンタリオ州政府
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後援：カナダ政府
カナダ・オンタリオ州政府



Alan Belcher
"Complex '91"
Installation
at SPIRAL
TOKYO

Alan Belcher

By Arturo Silva

Daily Yomiuri Art Critic

One of the most chillingly charming shows to be seen here in a long while is the installation by the Canadian artist Alan Belcher that is currently at the Spiral Building in Minami-Aoyama in Tokyo. (Until Sunday; 5-6-23 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, tel: 3498-1171)

In the long space next to the cafe, Belcher has made a sort of lozenge-shaped structure out of stacked concrete bricks. The bricks swing round and round, stopping here, continuing there, so that the height of the walled enclosure is nowhere the same; this allows one to step inside or even to hide from a person who might be on the other side.

But that's not all, of course. Parts of the bricks are lined—horizontally and vertically—with color laminated photographs (attached to the bricks by way of . . . velcro!). The photos are generally of industrial sites, curtain walls, buildings, and the like.

In the rear rotunda, Belcher has done much the same—made walls of photo-covered bricks—but this time, the shape compliments (and, by being so bare-boned, comments on) the smooth dome-covered space of Spiral. While a part of the wall might be only the height of one brick, the overall visual effect is of a sort of stumpy whorl or tower (or one whose top we only see, or one that is half-built or half-destroyed), with the curving walls gradually attaining a height that wants to be oh so much higher. Further, Belcher has spiraled the walls (two plans are also on view for an exact configuration) in a way that they seem to bend toward and away from one another: however, in fact, it is all one wall: and that forms a sort of maze without any center to reach, one only comes up to cul-de-sacs. (Of course, one thinks here of the Tower of Babel, and even of that stumpy Babel—one always thinks of it as really *towering* up there—by, who was it?, Breughel?)

These walls (this wall) too are covered in parts with photos. Also complimenting (and commenting on) is one particular picture of, I think, a mul-lion, that is going at an angle opposite to that of a window on the building's wall one sees in the background.

Bricks and pics, then. (More bricks than pics, too, if we want a sore allu-

sion to Beckett, not wholly inappropriate here.) (1,678 bricks, to be exact; the whole work measures 3 meters high, 10 meters wide, and 23 meters long.) One likes the seeming simplicity of it all, especially the openness: how the bricks are not entirely covered, but left also to be themselves; how the bricks don't make for smooth curves, but are sometimes relieved of that sad incapacity by the gentle wrapping of the cool, elegant photos (all blue and silver); of how the photos, playful as they are or might be, move in varying directions, never satisfied, hungry for more.

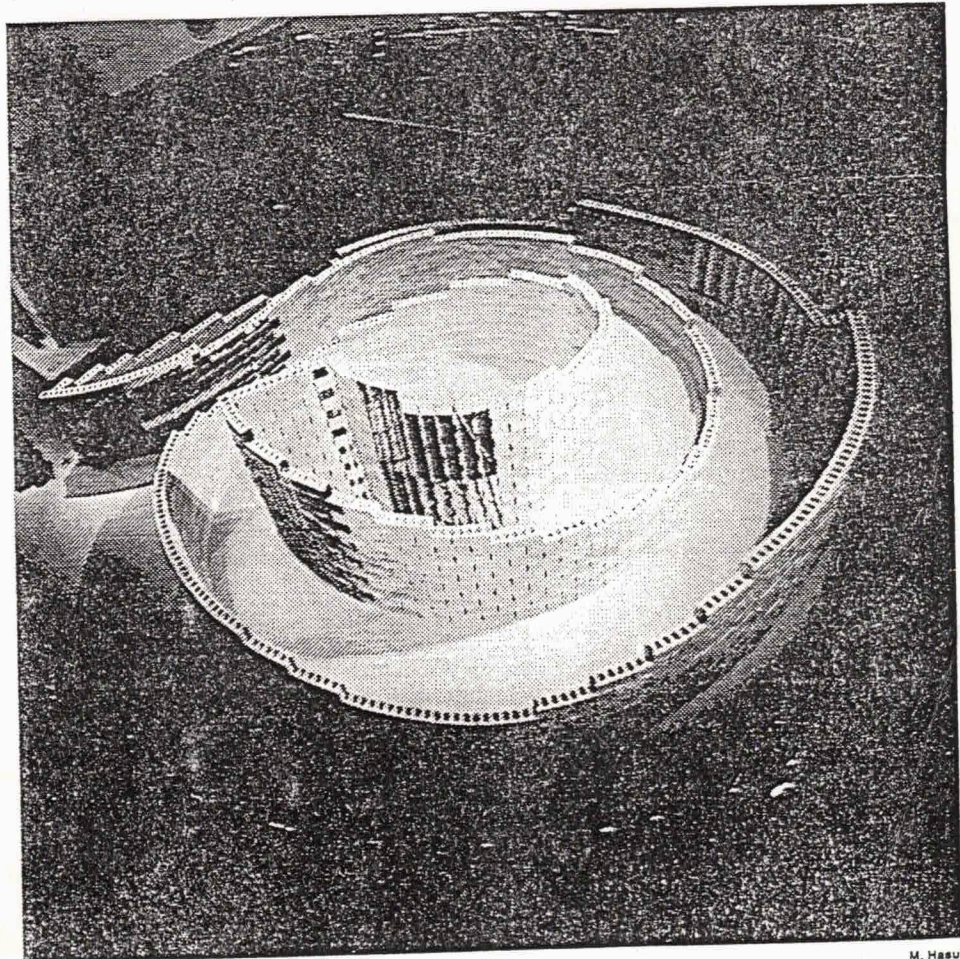
One likes walking around and within the work. One can also take the spiral walkway and look over and on to the work. From one angle, it even looks like the two parts are joined, like some great weird eye with a tail, an allusion.

Anonymity prevails—hence the chill. The scene is all too familiar: the 20th century's cliched cold, cold city of bricks, walls, dead images.

That is too easy an interpretation, of course. This is also sculpture/archi-

itecture/photography working as a single or combined medium, and that is more than most of the 20th century has to offer: it is about what we have become within our urban/consumer/technology life that is also seamless (and from which there seems to be no way out).

And especially in this city, Belcher has made similar installations elsewhere, but why does one feel this one is so Tokyo? Because it is so bare and dressed-up at the same time (this bare building within a dressed one), so decorative and free to be itself, so whole unto itself and yet so baldly incomplete, ever in the process of coming to its self-generation (and that process being the pure product), so much skin and bones that are so personal and charming, so anonymous and cold. But especially because it is all surface: the "center" is empty (and leads nowhere): there is no *inside* the "outside" and as in Tokyo, it is all wall-images of brick and paper with only immediate views through which we walk so heedlessly.



"Complex '91" by Alan Belcher (cement bricks, color laminated photographs, velcro tape, 10.3 m x 23.5 m x 3 m, 1991)



Wacoal Art Center

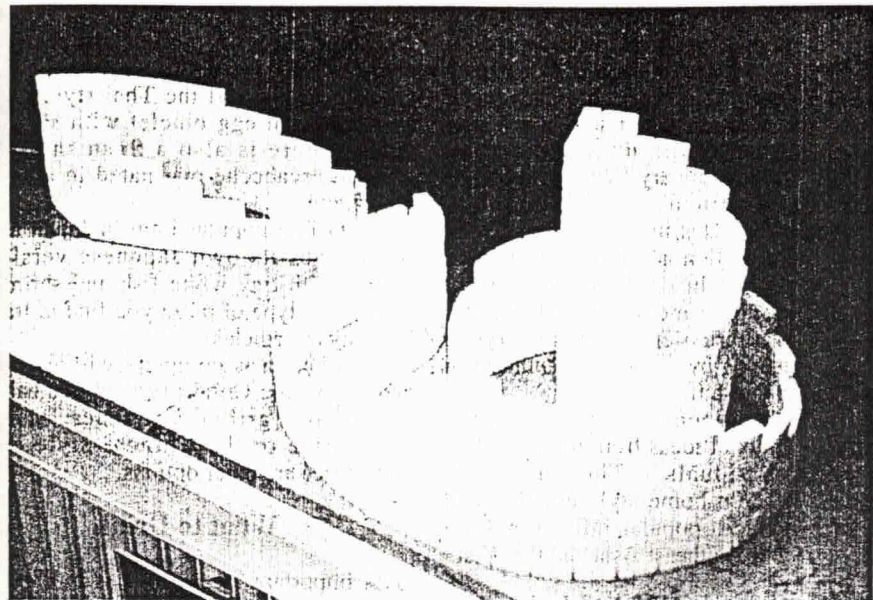
THE DAILY YOMIURI TOKYO

'91. 7. 11

アラン・ベルチャー展

91.7.1

アラン・ベルチャー - 展



Maquette of Complex '91 (sugar cubes) (Courtesy of Spiral)

ood sculpture into the tiny elevator at
er Ginza gallery.

Yamaguchi says she is able to justify
e move because of the way
emporary art sales have lifted in the
st five years. Her main buyers are
nstruction companies, new museums
d art galleries throughout Japan, and
ivate collectors.

The construction boom accounts for
ughly 40 percent of her sales. She has
und that the larger construction firms
nd to give a work of art to their client on
mpletion of their work. Clients also
eed to fill the big and new spaces they
ve. The proliferation of prefectural art
useums has further created a new
emand for contemporary art. About 40
percent of Yamaguchi's sales are to
useums and about 20 percent to
ollectors, most of whom are in their 40s
ad work at medium- or small-sized
terprises. She commented, in all cases
ey are men; women tend to blow their
ash on travel, cosmetics and fashion."

Despite the open and free sense of
pace everywhere, I found the results
quite patchy. Tokyo Gallery, crammed
with sculpture and painting, was simply a
mess. This gallery does not need more
pace, it needs somebody who under-
stands how to present art. Artists in this
able deserve better.

Nantenshi Gallery is using both up and
downstairs and all the walls for the
documentation of Inoue Bukichi's *My
Skyhole '91*. This work includes some
scale models that even so, presents a
lifeless and monotonous show. Yama-
moto's space turned on a near drama of
paintings, some massive in scale on both
levels, with works by Sam Francis
included.

Yamaguchi's presentation of three stone
sculptures by Okamoto Atsuo was the
most lively exhibition; the most exciting
of the three works was a mammoth kofun
form titled *Oblivion Eternal Green* (950 x
3,300 x 970cm). Despite its size, it is
lyrical and graceful with a distilled sense
of energy coming from within. It was
outstandingly presented. The current
show of tableaux by Momose Hisashi at
Soko Yamaguchi stays on until July 6.

The level above Yamaguchi's space,
which is run by Shoko Nagai, was well
used with a stand of steel sculptures by
Aoki Noe.

Camera

As part of the "Great Canada '91"
presentation in Tokyo, Spiral is showing
the work of Alan Belcher until July 14.
Called *Complex '91*, this piece follows
two earlier works, *Condo '87* and
Condo '88, where Belcher pulled together
building blocks and color shots from his
camera. This time the blocks in a spiral-
tower form stand three meters tall, 10
wide and 23 long. A made in Japan piece,

it shows the results of 10 days of camera
work when Belcher scrambled over
Tokyo's architecture, construction sites
and urban sprawl. He undertakes the
installation as a performance. Once the
blocks are in place he layers them with
his own imagery in vertical and horizontal
strips. In a statement about the
architectonic content of his approach,
Belcher refers to how he sees the real
world of architecture. He says the most
exciting stage is when a building is under
way, before it is complete. Any point of
completion for him is often anti-climatic,
predictable and disappointing.

The power of his imagery is the way it
bounces with almost aggressive impact
into the viewing space. It is an
externalized power with nothing inside.
Belcher plays this visual game a lot. His
previous work based on commodity and
mail art ran awash with issues and themes
that probed cynically and in humor at
consumerism, marketing, advertising and
packaging. Out of this phase he
developed an interest in objet and
sculptural units and has graduated since
then to quite large installations. There is a
lot of fun in his work and most of it is
right on the surface and around the edges.

For instance, Belcher once covered
three suitcases with different images, one
with guns, the other with knives, and the
third with crocodiles. They all cleared
customs and entered borders that are
closed to contraband. His aesthetic
reminds me of defacement. He is against
art being elitist. His images of
photographs are shot through with nails
and staples, nuts and bolts. He ships his
work off like products. One consignment
of about 30 crates plastered with waybills,
invoices and customs slips all of which he
photographed. He stenciled on the
instructions for their delivery. The joke
was that everything was on the outside
and nothing within. The shipment went
from Canada to Cologne, Germany where
it was exhibited.

Belcher is an '80s artist who reloaded
his camera with a new line of software. It
has given us all not only a fresh way to
see the image, but life and ourselves.

Soko Gallery Yamaguchi; Address: 1-
17-4 Shin Kiba, Koto-ku 136; **Telephone:**
(03) 3521-6417

Nantenshi Gallery; Address: (same as
above); **Telephone:** (03) 3563-3511

Spiral: Wacoal Art Center; Address: 5-
6-23 Minami Aoyama, Minato-ku 107;
Telephone: (03) 3498-1171