

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Francis Aljys, Jimbo Blachly, Isidro Blasco, Jaime Davidovich, Mark Dion, Maximilian Goldfarb, Valerie Hegarty, Julia Mandle, Helen Mirra, Matthew Northridge, Dennis Oppenheim, Sarah Oppenheimer, Dan Price, Lisa Sigal, Katrin Sigurdardottir, Jane South, Jude Tallichet, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Clara Williams

TOURS

The cityscape—especially its forgotten, run-down, or normally unseen parts—provided raw material to Gordon Matta-Clark. Drawing on his training as an architect, on the 1970s zeitgeist of Land Art and site-specificity, and on his own rambunctious delight in out-of-the-way places, Matta-Clark was famous for conducting fieldtrips, tours, and explorations of all sorts. He felt that it was important for his art audience to experience first-hand the urban locations that he took as contexts for his sculpture, installation, and filmmaking—and, according to his friends, he was always ready to gather willing companions into his truck and set off for unexpected destinations. In this spirit, the “Odd Lots” exhibition incorporates a series of bus tours to selected Queens sliver-spaces among those purchased by Matta-Clark in 1973. Each tour will be lead by a different artist or curator, who will present an eclectic combination of lecture, performance, and site-seeing.

Saturday, September 17

Jaime Davidovich, video artist and friend of Matta-Clark, will take the group to some of the sites that they visited in 1975. An on-site performance by Julia Mandle will also take place.

Saturday, October 1

Jimbo Blachly, Lytle Shaw, and the Chadwicks—two nineteenth-century dandies—lead a Grand Tour of Matta-Clark's Queens.

Saturday, October 15

Mark Dion, Michael Crewdson, and Margaret Mittelbach lead “The Magical Misery Tour: A Natural History of Queens.”

Saturday, October 22

Nato Thompson leads a tour of the tactical resistance of everyday life. From ebullient window displays to Maoist bakeries to cars parked in the wrong direction, the resistance that surrounds our everyday lives will be exposed.

white columns
320 West 13th Street
New York, NY 10014
212.924.4212
www.whitecolumns.org

Gallery Hours:
Tues - Saturday: noon - 6 pm

Queens Museum of Art
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, NY 11368
718.592.9700
www.queensmuseum.org

Museum Hours:
Wed - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Sat - Sunday: noon - 5 pm



NATIONAL
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FOR THE ARTS

This exhibition has been made possible
by generous grants from the
National Endowment for the Arts and
Altria Group, Inc.

ODD LOTS: REVISITING GORDON MATTA-CLARK'S FAKE ESTATES

White Columns: September 9, 2005 – October 15, 2005
Queens Museum of Art: September 11, 2005 – January 22, 2006

“Odd Lots” was conceived and curated by Cabinet magazine editors
Jeffrey Kastner, Sina Najafi, and Frances Richard.



Gordon Matta-Clark's undated sketch on the exterior of a file folder depicting several of his lots. Courtesy Jane Crawford, The Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark.

FAKE ESTATES & GORDON MATTA-CLARK

This exhibition engages the legacy of Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) through the history of his provocative project *Fake Estates* (1973-4). A quixotic investigation into the nature of property, ownership, landscape, and absence, *Fake Estates* was begun during New York's notorious fiscal crisis of the early 1970s when Matta-Clark discovered that the city periodically auctioned off “gutterspace”—absurdly small slivers of land carved from the urban grid by anomalies in surveying, zoning, and municipal construction. Matta-Clark purchased fifteen of these properties at auction. He then visited and photographed each one, and collected the related maps and deeds. According to a 1973 interview, Matta-Clark planned *Fake*

Estates to be a synthesis of Conceptual Art and Land Art concerns—interweaving his interests in systems of architectural, sculptural, social, and linguistic organization:

The art-works will consist of three parts: a written documentation of the piece of land, including exact dimensions and location and perhaps a list of weeds growing there; a full-scale photograph of the property, and the property itself. The first two parts will be displayed in a gallery, and buyers of the art will purchase the deed to the land as well.

The works described by Matta-Clark were never made in his lifetime. After his death, ownership of the slivers reverted to the City of New York for nonpayment of taxes, and the collected materials were forgotten. In the early 1990s, they were rediscovered in his estate and arranged by his widow, Jane Crawford, into collages featuring the composite photographs, the maps, and the deeds.

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QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART

These posthumously assembled works—which now reside in art collections all over the world—thus bear a double stamp of absence. The *Fake Estates* mark illogical gaps and voids on which the highly rationalized structures of real estate and government paradoxically are founded. They also gesture to the mysterious overlapping of the tangible with the intangible—the “real” with the “fake”—that characterizes not only property and value, but the life of an artwork.

“ODD LOTS”

During his relatively short working life and throughout the quarter-century since his death, Gordon Matta-Clark has been esteemed as an artist’s artist whose unique ability to blend visceral, physical sculpture with subtly conceptual ideas has been a source of inspiration to creative producers working in a range of disciplines. Acknowledging and encouraging the extension of this extraordinary example, *Cabinet*—as part of the magazine’s 2003 “Property” issue—obtained licenses to the ten *Fake Estates* lots still available from the city. Growing out of this editorial project, “Odd Lots” is structured in two parts. The historical portion of the show, at the Queens Museum of Art, examines the history of Matta-Clark’s artwork, and explores the origins of the property slivers through archival materials illustrating the impact of administrative procedures on the topography of the city. Through animated documentation, an installation marking the slivers on the Panorama of the City of New York, and a presentation of three *Fake Estates* collages, this portion of the exhibition addresses questions of urbanism, artistic authority, and the intersections of public and private history.

The contemporary portion of the show, at White Columns, presents speculative projects commissioned from a group of nineteen artists, ranging from Matta-Clark’s peers to emerging practitioners. Working in a variety of media, the participating artists investigate their own responses to Matta-Clark’s precedent, and consider the ways in which the properties acquired for *Fake Estates* might be used as starting-points—literal or metaphorical—for new sculpture, drawing, video, photography, installation, and performance.

These two venues link “Odd Lots” to *Fake Estates* on multiple levels. Engaging both the life of the Queens neighborhoods where fourteen of the original fifteen slivers were located (the fifteenth was in Staten Island), and the history of White Columns, which was founded by Matta-Clark and Jeffrey Lew in 1969, “Odd Lots” invites the viewer to follow Matta-Clark in investigating “voids, gaps, left-over spaces, places that are not developed” except through the attention of the alert passerby.



ABOUT GORDON MATTA-CLARK

Gordon Matta-Clark was born in 1943, in New York City, the son of Anne Clark and the Surrealist painter Roberto Matta Echuarren. His parents separated shortly after his birth, and he and his twin brother, John Sebastian (called Batan), lived with their mother on Patchin Place in lower Manhattan, but also visited their paternal grandparents in Chile, and their father, who had resettled in Paris. Matta-Clark received a B.A. in architecture from Cornell University, where in 1969 he met the artists Dennis Oppenheim and Robert Smithson in connection with the important exhibition “Earth Art.” Shortly thereafter he moved to SoHo, where he was at the forefront of the developing artist’s community, helping to found FOOD Restaurant and the 112 Greene Street Gallery (now White Columns). In the 1970s, Matta-Clark became known for his adaptation of Land Art principles—including site-specificity, resistance to commercial display, and strenuous physical production—to abandoned buildings in the urban environment. Responding to the notorious fiscal crisis that nearly crippled the New York economy in those years, Matta-Clark appropriated empty buildings and restructured them with large-scale geometric “cuts,” in effect turning the waste spaces into walk-in sculptures. Pursuing these projects sometimes without official sanction, Matta-Clark understood that his work, though massive, was also ephemeral. Indeed, none of his large-scale building cuts—which were executed not only in New York, but in Paris, Chicago, Antwerp, and elsewhere—survives. These works are documented, however, in sculptural fragments, and in the artist’s voluminous output of drawings, photographs, films, and artist’s books, all of which attest to his restless, playful, and yet rigorously conceived engagement with what he called “Anarchitecture.” Matta-Clark died of cancer in 1978. Since then, he has been the subject of numerous exhibitions, publications, and symposia, and his work is represented in major collections all over the world.

Background: Shapes and measurements for Matta-Clark’s 15 lots.

