

# minimalism

Adams's outdoor bronze sculpture in the Hammarskjöld Sculpture Garden is part of an exhibition program there made possible in part by funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. There are two parts to the work, separated by about 12 feet. Both consist of foot-tall figures placed in disproportionately small settings.

In "It Happened on the Hill," a Klanlike figure and a threatened woman are roped together on top of a hill, while a man with a cat head and a knife in his left hand seems to be climbing toward them. In "Incident Across the Valley," a naked nymph-like woman points toward a man departing or fleeing a half-shell-shape area that suggests a water hole.

The narrative possibilities raised by the work are almost endless. What is missing is something that could make us care about them. Adams seems to believe that he can do without those formal considerations that give the work scale and weight. Without sculptural energy and life, however, there is no sense of generosity, no sense of urgency, no sense that the work, no matter what the content, is anything but trivial. (Through Sept. 30.)

**David Ireland** (New Museum of Contemporary Art, 583 Broadway): David Ireland is an artist who lives in the state of Washington and has been involved with architecture, sculpture, furniture design and performances. The centerpiece of this exhibition, which also includes several small, mostly conceptual pieces, some of them reminiscent of Joseph Cornell, is an installation made for the site. Three huge horsehoe- or magnetlike objects, made of plywood and painted white, are nested or jammed together, in and around the two columns in the room.

The work suggests the moment after giants have completed a game of horsehoes and gone off to have a few beers. One of the objects is wrapped around a column—a "ringer." Another, on top of the "ringer" and therefore canceling it, is a "leaner." Just who the players were, however, who won, and where the bar is remains unknown.

The installation's effect on the space is complex and political. The objects are proportionately so large that they make the gallery small and precarious. The magnetlike shapes, however, face in all directions and seem to suck in everything around them. The objects make the gallery seem both aggressor and victim, a field for play and a something in the



Martin Puryear's "Self" (1978), at the New Museum

grip of forces playing upon it. (Through Sept. 9.)

**"Waterfront Art"** (Federal Courthouse, Foley Square): There are eight artists in this exhibition, organized by Deborah Masters and spread over the large Federal Courthouse lobby. Five of the artists, including Masters herself, who is represented by several frontal heads of women, are sculptors.

The one work in the show that appears to have been made for the lobby is Michael McKeown's wood sculpture "Sentinel," which adds to the austere space an appropriate sense of fantasy. Rectangular, like the architecture, in a black wood that holds its own against the striated white marble floor and walls, "Sentinel" lurks near the entrance, behind the security guards. There is a sense that if those guards should discover anyone suspicious, they could rope that person to the post of the sculpture or else hang the malefactor from its gallows-like beams.

The exhibition also includes two steel sculptures by Lee Tribe, both more complex than they might seem, and a wood and steel sculpture by Chris Duncan called "Beautiful Night." On one side of Duncan's work, there is a small building-like wood construction, which is related to his wood sculpture on display in nearby City Hall Park. The main part of the sculpture consists of a cage-like construction, not unlike the cages of Herbert Ferber, in which an arch is filled with steel forms, which have the feel of shapes in a Charles Burchfield night sky. There is a struggle between formalism and lyricism in Duncan's work that is still in the process of being resolved. (Through Sept. 28.)