

Mirosław Balka

'Still'

4 April – 16 May 2003

Artist reception: Friday, April 4, 6-8pm

still (stil) **adj** 1. without sound; quiet; silent

adv 1. at or up to the time indicated, whether past, present or future
2. nevertheless; even then; yet

Anthony Meier Fine Arts is pleased to announce an exhibition of new sculpture by Polish artist Mirosław Balka. His first San Francisco appearance follows many international venues, such as Documenta and the Venice Biennale (representing Poland, 1993). Balka's work can be seen in public and private collections worldwide, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Mirosław Balka was born in Poland in 1958. Raised a Catholic in Socialist Poland, Balka grew up in Otwock, a small town outside Warsaw where his father was an engraver and his grandfather a mason. Balka continues the family sculpture tradition, albeit using more fragile and less durable materials such as terrazzo, metal, leather, salt and ash.

Understanding Balka's background is an important component in understanding his work. Transforming humble substances into symbols of human experience, Balka uses materials with a strong personal significance and scales his structures to his physical dimensions or the geometry of his childhood home in Otwock (which he now uses as a studio). These allusions to the traces of life, the passage of time and place and memory are the cornerstones of Balka's installations.

The seven elements that comprise *Still* speak to this meditation on memory and loss. A pile of leather medicine balls, alluding to high school gym class, is stacked to Balka's exact height. A steel circle holding an empty glass, twisted and fixed to the wall, hangs so that the glass is at the exact level of his mouth. A round platform covered in salt rotates counterclockwise, the salt symbolizing the sweat and tears left by trying to turn back time.

There is an underlying personal reminiscence to the pieces in *Still*. Illustrative of the exhibition title, the work in the show is both quiet and meditative but has a demonstrative presence by the simple fact that it continues to exist.