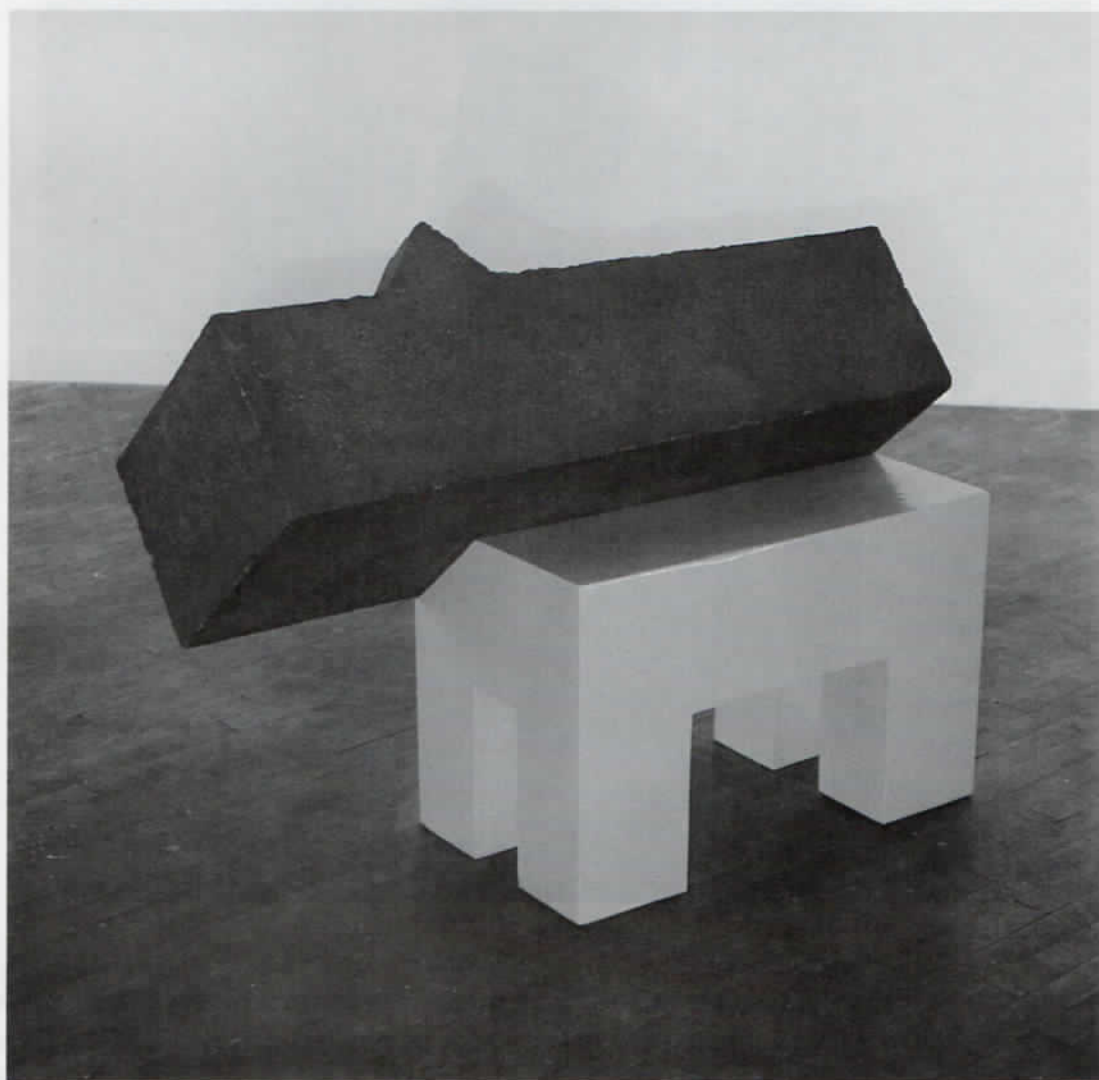


Charles Ray

I use forms that are images of men and animals. My interest is not in the identity of the image, but rather in the feeling of human duality and contradiction that the sculptures generate. These feelings are communicated through the use of constructed elements made of wood, concrete, or steel. Briefly, in these paragraphs, I will explain the sculptural and personal sources of my work.

Psychoanalysis traces human trauma to a conflict between eros and death. Most of our human activity has its roots in this battle. A man's intellect abstracts the world into social orders of right and wrong, yet he still carries demanding instincts that contradict his social role. Man is in a struggle to keep the conflicting elements of his nature in equilibrium. My search is not to uncover the meaning of man's conflict. Rather, I attempt to shed light on the conflict itself. These



sculptures simply focus on the tenuous balance between man's body and soul. The ultimate meaning of this balance is left to the interpretation of the spectator.

My ideas are realized through the concept of constructed sculpture. The relatively young tradition of modernist constructed sculpture is based on the relationship of a sculpture's parts, rather than its individual shape or profile. Visually, I use the geometric forms of modernism, but personally I reject its content. The definition of modernism is elusive. Generally, it views

form and content as one and the same; line, color, and shape have forces of expression independent of an external association with the world. For example, the constructed sculpture of Anthony Caro uses interacting steel shapes to produce the visual sensation of kinesthetic energy. His sculptures are not about shape, form, or line, but rather about the energy that can exist between these elements. This type of work has no meaning outside of itself. The content



exists in the experiential feelings generated by the sculpture. This is the point in modernist theory where my work becomes deeply influenced.

My work has always used the idea of sculpture being about the relationship of its shapes. However, by generating an image into these shapes, the sculpture acquires psychological implications that destroy the purity of modernism. I use forms that are images of men and animals. It is the sculptural juxtaposition of these figures and their parts that interest me. The men and animals are symbolic of conflicting feelings and emotions. I use the energy of constructed sculpture to give psychological power to the conflict. When I bring these symbolic parts together, I am looking for a metaphorical balancing of man's conflicting nature.