

Richard Serra

BIOGRAPHY

Richard Serra was born November 2, 1939, in San Francisco. While working in steel mills to support himself, Serra attended the University of California at Berkeley and Santa Barbara from 1957 to 1961, receiving a B.A. in English literature. He then studied at Yale University, New Haven, from 1961 to 1964, completing his B.F.A. and M.F.A. Serra trained as a painter at Yale, where he worked with Josef Albers on his book *The Interaction of Color* (1963). During the early 1960s, he came into contact with Philip Guston, Robert Rauschenberg, Ad Reinhardt, and Frank Stella. In 1964 and 1965, Serra traveled to Paris on a Yale Traveling Fellowship, where he frequently visited the reconstruction of Constantin Brancusi's studio at the Musée National d'Art Moderne. He spent much of the following year in Florence on a Fulbright grant, and traveled throughout southern Europe and northern Africa. The young artist was given his first solo exhibition at Galleria La Salita, Rome, in 1966. Later that year, he moved to New York, where his circle of friends included Carl Andre, Walter De Maria, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Smithson. In 1966, Serra made his first sculptures out of nontraditional materials such as fiberglass and rubber. From 1968 to 1970, he executed a series of Splash pieces, in which molten lead was splashed or cast into the junctures between floor and wall. Serra had his first solo exhibition in the United States at the Leo Castelli Warehouse, New York. By 1969, he had begun the prop pieces, whose parts are not welded together or otherwise attached but are balanced solely by forces of weight and gravity. That year, Serra was included in *Nine Young Artists: Theodoron Awards* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. He produced the first of his numerous short films in 1968 and in the early 1970s experimented with video. The Pasadena Art Museum organized a solo exhibition of Serra's work in 1970, and in the same year he received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship. That year, he helped Smithson execute *Spiral Jetty* at Great Salt Lake in Utah; Serra, however, was less intrigued by the vast American landscape than by urban sites, and in 1970 he installed a piece on a dead-end street in the Bronx. He received the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture in 1975 and traveled to Spain to study Mozarabic architecture in 1982. Serra was honored with solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Tübingen, Germany, in 1978; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, in 1984; the Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany, in 1985; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1986. The 1990s saw further honors for Serra's work: a retrospective of his drawings at the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; the Wilhelm Lehbruck prize for sculpture in Duisburg in 1991; and the following year, a retrospective at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. In 1993, Serra was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1994, he was awarded the Praemium Imperiale by the Japan Art Association and an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland. Serra has continued to exhibit in both group and solo shows in such venues as Leo Castelli Gallery and Gagosian

Gallery, New York. He continues to produce large-scale steel structures for sites both in the United States and Europe. In 1997–98, his *Torqued Ellipses* (1997) were exhibited at the Dia Center for the Arts, New York. Serra and his wife, Clara Weyergraf-Serra, live outside New York and in Nova Scotia.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Richard Serra: *Sculpture*. Exh. cat. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986.

Richard Serra: *Sculpture: Forty Years*. Exh. cat. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2007.

Richard Serra: *Writings, Interviews*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Foster, Hal, and Gordon Hughes, ed. *Richard Serra. October Files, 1*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: MIT Press, 2000.

SELECTED EXHIBITION LIST

(solo museum shows)

- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Richard Serra: Tekeningen/Drawings 1978.
- Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Richard Serra. 1984
- Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany. Richard Serra: Skulpturen und Zeichnungen. 1985
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Richard Serra: Sculpture. 1986
- Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. Richard Serra: 7 Spaces, 7 Sculptures. 1988
- Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands. Richard Serra: Tekeningen/Drawings. 1990
- Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland. Richard Serra: The Hours of the Day. 1990
- CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, France. Richard Serra: Threats of Hell. 1990
- Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden. Richard Serra: Skulptur. 1991
- Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. Richard Serra. 1992
- Tate Gallery, London. Richard Serra: Weight and Measure. 1993
- Serpentine Gallery, London. Richard Serra: Drawings. 1992
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Richard Serra: Selections from the Permanent Collection. 1993
- Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum der Stadt Duisburg, Germany. Richard Serra: Props. 1994.
- The Drawing Center, New York. Richard Serra: Weight and Measure Drawings 1994.
- Dia Center for the Arts, New York. Richard Serra: Torqued Ellipses. 1998
- Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Richard Serra: Rio Rounds. 1998
- The Geffen Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Richard Serra: Sculpture 1985–1998. 1999
- Museo Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain. Richard Serra Sculpture. April 27–October 17, 1999
- Trajan's Market, Rome. Richard Serra: Mostra di sculture. 2000
- The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis, Missouri. Sculpture and Drawings by Richard Serra. 2003
- Piazza Plebiscito, Naples, Italy. Richard Serra: Naples. 2004
- Museo Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain. Richard Serra: The Matter of Time. Permanent installation: opened 2005
- Museum of Modern Art, New York. Richard Serra: Sculpture: Forty Years. 2007
- Galerías Nacionales du Grand Palais, Paris. Monumenta 2008: Richard Serra: Promenade. 2008
- The Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria. Richard Serra: Drawings--Work Comes Out of Work. 2008
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective. 2011

AWARDS AND DEGREES

University of California, Degree in English, 1961
Yale University, B.F.A, 1962; M.F.A. 1964
Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship, 1970
National Endowment for the Arts, Individual Artists' Fellowship Grant, 1974
Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture, 1975
City of Goslar, Germany, Kaiserring der Stadt Goslar, 1981
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, The Carnegie Prize, 1985
City of Duisburg, Germany, Wilhelm Lehmbruck Award, 1991
American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Elected member 1993
California College of Arts and Crafts ("Cal Arts"), Oakland, California, Honorary Doctorate, 1994
Japan Arts Association, Tokyo, Praemium Imperiale, 1994
Royal Academy of Arts, London, Elected Honorary Academician, 1995
American Academy of Arts and Letters, Elected member, 1995
American Academy of Arts and Letters, Gold Medal for Sculpture, 2001
Bundesrepublik Deutschland/Germany, Orden Pour le Merite für Wissenschaften und Künste, 2002
Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, 2004
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Bay Area Treasure Award, 2007
Ministerio de Cultura, Spain. Orden de las Artes y las Letras de España (Medal of the Spanish Order of Arts and Letters), 2008
Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, Honorary Doctorate, 2008
Universidad Pública de Navarra, Spain, Doctor Honoris Causa, 2009
Yale University, Doctor of Fine Arts, 2009
Pratt Institute, New York, Honorary Doctorate, 2009
University of London, Honorary Degree Doctor of Literature, 2009
Harvard University, Honorary doctorate, 2010
Fundación Príncipe de Asturias, Spain, Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts, 2010