Steve Waldeck
A Kinetic Artist's Transition
August 28 - October 4, 1987

Opening Reception: Friday, August 28 • 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Music By: Percussionists Mark Smith and Brad Stitz
Steve Waldeck was born in 1943 on a West Virginia farm. He spent his early years without electricity and developed an intense interest in art that was nurtured by his mother, a school teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. His early life as an artist was as an abstract painter and sculptor of found objects, often mechanical parts. In the 1960's he became fascinated with the concept of motion and began his experimentation with moving sculpture. He received his B.F.A. from the Ohio University in 1965 and his M.A. from University of California at Berkeley in 1967. His graduate work in kinetic art gained for him the coveted Eisner prize from Berkeley upon graduation.

His three-year residency in California earned him recognition as an innovative kinetic artist, culminated by his one man show at Live Oak Park in Berkeley. His art focused on the minimal sculpture style with electronically programmed light and sound, which received critical acclaim. In 1969, his work was included in a large show of kinetic light and sound art in New York City at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts. Several of his early works became part of the permanent collection of the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, later known as the Exploratorium.

In 1969 Steve Waldeck moved to Chicago to establish an area of experimental media called Kinetics and Electronics within the Sculpture Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. As a result of his efforts, other areas were established such as Sound, Lasers and Holography, and Neon. His involvement helped to create an atmosphere that led to the development of the Time Arts Department. Steve Waldeck is responsible for molding the programs at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago into the only curriculum that offers extended research and development of experimental media and kinetic art.

During the 1970's his art changed from the clinical minimal art style to a more personalized somewhat surrealistic, direction. In the early 1980's there was a re-examination of the traditional structures of art along with a continuing experimentation with new media, particularly lights and sounds. The art that resulted from this time seemed to blend a personal statement with the formal structures of collage and assemblage art forms and there was most often the structure of a sound composition used as an overlay.

The re-examination of traditional painting through the experimentation with electric light and surface pigments has figured strongly in Steve's present direction. Today his work can be either conventional in format, as in painting, or unconventional, through the use of illusionary architectural spaces. The subject matter, however, involves the reality of light. By using the electric light he is able to extend the range of the palette. Motion of natural forms such as leaves adds an element of time and believability. The use of naturalistic sounds heightens the moment of the pieces.

Steve Waldeck has shown his art nationally and has placed work in many private corporate collections that range from Canada to Florida. He is one of the co-founders of the Chicago Sculpture Society (along with Richard Hunt and Barry Tinsley).
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East Room; 1986 (with artist)
Architecturally false space of only 14 inches in
depth with illusion of light in floor and end
doorway. The kinetic activity shows in moving
leaves on the floor and in the side window. This is
an example of illusion that grips.
STEVE WALDECK: A KINE
TIC ARTIST’S TRANSITION
American Flyer; 1980
An assemblage of found materials in a traditional sculpture structure with kinetic light and sound. Electronically produced steam whistle.

August; 1981
A Brief History of Kinetic Art

Kinetic Art developed as a mode of abstract art that experimented with a variety of materials and incorporated motion into art forms. It often involved the actual motion of material objects, as in mobiles or motorized sculpture, as well as the illusion of motion through the play of light. Kinetic art was a logical growth in the search for new expression by artists who sought to understand visual perception and appeal to the spectator with a new form of contemporary impressionism that would embody the spirit of today's technological world.

The roots of the Kinetic Art movement can be traced to the early 1900's when the Cubists tried to summarize time-space changes by presenting several points of view of the same forms in a single painting. The Futurist movement attempted to literally produce a pictorial equivalent of dynamic movement through a series of conservative static images. The most famous example of this was Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase (1912). The futurists glorified speed and motion as a symbol of modern society. The Kinetic Artists began appearing with their experimental ventures in the 1920's. Today Kinetic Artists are represented by well-known names like Naum Gabo, Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp and Jean Tinguely, American Frank Malina and Hungarian Nicolas Schoffer explored "Luminism", the illusion of light, and also became involved in the incorporation of music and music structures into art forms.

As artists have always done, the Kinetic Artist attempts to represent a complicated and technical world through his own aesthetic interpretation, and the result can be personal and introspective.

A special thanks to Jane Waldeck for her participation in this exhibit.
College of Lake County
19351 West Washington Street
Grayslake, Illinois 60030

Gallery Hours:
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Friday
10:00 a.m. - 200 p.m. Saturday
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sunday