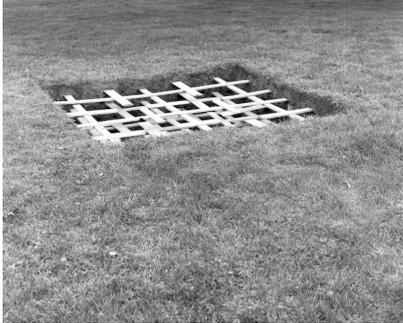


Ground Beneath Our Feet

Mary Miss

August 18 through September 19, 2025



Untitled, 1973

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio

The site for this temporary project was on a flat lawn outside the art museum, where a number of other sculptures were displayed on concrete foundations. To the side of the building a seven foot square, two and a half foot deep pit is cut into the lawn's surface. As the visitor reaches its edge, the piece becomes visible without warning. Three layers of wood lattice are embedded in the earth walls of the hole. Though the lattice is so clearly framed, it is unclear where it ends, that is, how far it extends into the surrounding ground. Unlike a monolith, the work confronts the viewer in a way that is compelling by its absence. The engagement with this modestly scaled piece is intended to be emotional, as well as physical, as it suggests a trap or pit, which in turn raises questions about its use.

7' by 7' by 2'

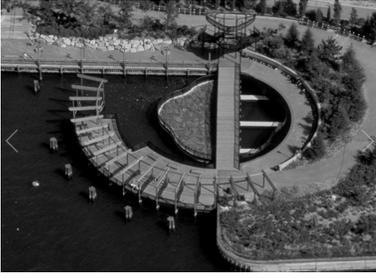


Battery Park City Landfill, 1973

Lower Manhattan, New York

In the early seventies one of the few large open spaces in Manhattan was the landfill that has become Battery Park City. Approaching the site from the north, the visitor saw nothing at first. Five insubstantial billboard-like structures were placed fifty feet apart across the site. As the viewer walked to the front of these plank walls the project materialized: the unimposing structures held a series of clearly articulated concentric circles descending into the ground. It appeared as though a column of air was being defined as it tunneled into the ground; the circles are marking out the distance to materialize the space. All the bulk of a traditional monument or monolith had been cut away from this temporary work. The viewer was engaged in the making of the piece; movement was necessary for it to become visible.

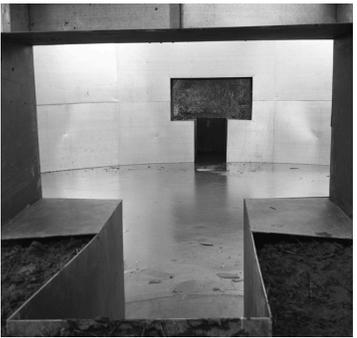
5.5' by 12' sections at 50' intervals



South Cove, 1984-1987

Battery Park City | New York, New York

Situated at the tip of Manhattan, was created using the excavation from the construction of the World Trade Center towers. Unoccupied for years, the sand and tar-surfaced landscape felt more like a stage set than part of the city. This sense of artifice—land with water flowing beneath its edge—informed the project from the start. The design deconstructs the platform, opening it to reveal the under-structure and allow new access to the water. As visitors emerge from the city, the edge becomes a space for examination, where built and natural landscapes meet. Walkways split and descend, bringing people closer to the water—sometimes even covered in high tide—while a curving pier and overlook invite reflection within the life of the city.



Sunken Pool, 1974

Greenwich, Connecticut

A path leads the visitor along the edge of a soccer field, through a pine grove to a simple footbridge over a stream. The accumulation of environments continued through dense brambles until the path was interrupted by a twenty foot diameter wood and galvanized steel structure. In line with the path were two low-facing T-shaped openings in the steel walls. At first only the top of the near opening was visible. As the visitor approached the structure further, the presence of water in the bottom of the drum was revealed. In contrast to the dense vegetation of the surroundings this space is perfectly still, the water shining off the smooth reflective surface of its metal walls. Ephemeral elements usually associated with the natural environment are momentarily captured and made tangible within the structure. While recalling the familiar utilitarian imagery of an architectural or engineered environment, the structure is closely attuned to the engagement of human scale. 20' by 13'



Field Rotation, 1980-1981 (video of sculpture)

Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, University Park, Illinois

From the University parking lot, a striking landscape unfolds: a large mound, a tower, and a field of posts span the flat, former prairie. The posts, resembling utility poles or property markers, are cut to a level plane, subtly revealing the land's natural slope. At the center, a mound rises from the flat terrain, inviting closer inspection. Climbing it reveals a hidden, sunken courtyard with walkways, ladders, and a central well that reflects recent rainfall. This intimate, constructed space contrasts the openness of the field, offering both a physical refuge and a new way of seeing the surrounding landscape. Here, movement and experience matter more than form alone.

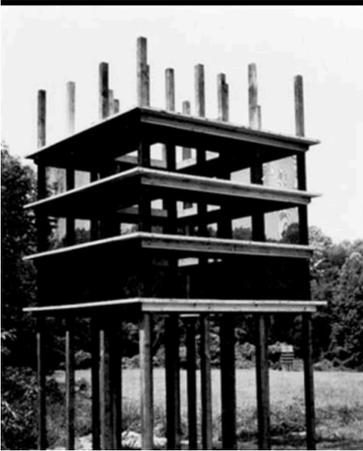
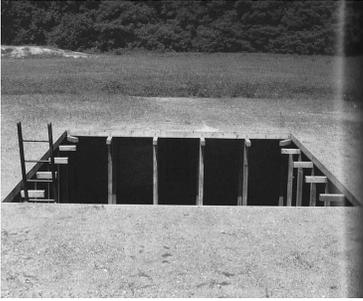
Field Rotation, 1980-1981 (drawings of sculpture)

Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, University Park, Illinois

Field Rotation, 1980-1981 (model of sculpture)

Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, University Park, Illinois

Group Photo at *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys, 1977-1978*



Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys, 1977-1978

Nassau County Museum of Fine Arts in Roslyn, Long Island, New York

Set in a four-acre clearing at the Nassau County Museum, this temporary installation features three tower-like structures, two semi-circular mounds, and an underground courtyard built with vernacular techniques. Visitors navigate the work freely, piecing together its elements through movement—encountering towers that

subtly shift in scale and accessibility, passing between earth mounds into a sunken square court, and exploring layered passages from light to dark. By undermining the field itself and shifting perceptions of height, space, and solidity, the work invites both visual and bodily engagement, prompting questions about presence, boundaries, and one's position within the landscape.

Mary Miss Bio

Mary Miss has been redefining how art is integrated into the public realm since the early 1970s. She is interested in how artists can play a more central role in addressing the complex issues of our times—making environmental and social sustainability into tangible experiences is a primary goal. Collaboration has been central to her work as she has developed projects as diverse as creating a temporary memorial around the perimeter of Ground Zero, marking the predicted flood level of Boulder, Colorado, or revealing the history of the Union Square Subway station in New York City.

Miss' work crosses boundaries between landscape architecture, architecture, urban design, and graphic communication. Her vision favors site-specificity and human perception over traditional concerns of the public monument. Trained as a sculptor, her work creates situations that emphasize a site's history, ecology, and aspects of the environment that often go unnoticed. Throughout her career, Mary Miss has collaborated closely with architects, planners, engineers, ecologists, and public administrators. Through these collaborative initiatives, Miss has realized the potential for artists to help encourage the involvement of all citizens and inspire the personal and political will to create revitalized, sustainable cities. In 2009 she initiated work on City as Living Laboratory, a framework for making issues of sustainability compelling to the public.

Mary Miss has won numerous awards, including the 2023 Arts and Letters Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the 2017 Bedrock of New York Award, the 2011 Design Excellence Award for The Passage, Staten Island Memorial Green project, 2001 New York Masterworks Award for the Framing Union Square project, the Centennial Medal from the American Academy in Rome in 2001, and an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Washington University in 2000. She has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Resident Artist at the American Academy in Rome and a recipient of several New York State Council on the Arts grants and NEA grants. City as Living Lab also received a grant from the National Science Foundation for their project, WaterMarks, in Milwaukee in 2021

Recently, Miss' work has been shown at the Nasher in 2023, the Aldrich Museum in 2022, the Nevada Art Museum in 2021, with Thaddeus Ropac in both Paris and London in 2020 and 2021, the National Gallery of Singapore in 2018 and the Guggenheim Museum (Contemplating the Void) in 2010 among other locations.

<https://marymiss.com>