

# Mary Boone Wellington

## *Pure Energy*

Dates: 15 May - 5 Jun 03

East Coast artist Mary Boone Wellington has long been known throughout U.S. art circles for her maverick virtuosity and inventive use of new materials. Her first solo show at Manhattan's C3: Gallery, a survey of her new sculptures and installations, however, offers insight into the artist's continuous interest in light, color and reflection.



As the title suggests, many of the works presented in the gallery explore the relationship between form, matter and spirit, and challenge the viewer to explore and reflect upon his or her own sense of perception. Thus it is not so much the physical space the sculptures take that is Wellington's interest, but rather the space between forms, where color begins to live in a way distinct from the regular flat surface. "Every object and form exists as energy in a pre-manifest state that is subject to multiple true interpretations," says Wellington. "When experiencing this state—the heart of the object that seeks expression—I can bring another dimension of light to the forms, so that we are drawn to them for their beauty and rightness."

All of the sculptures are made from Lightblocks<sup>®</sup>, Wellington's newly-patented polymer material that she developed in 1999 as an alternative to colorful glass for use in her public sculptures. The new artistic medium that she produces in as many colors as paint itself is most unusual for its interior luminosity, which can be described as extra-dimensional and seemingly bottomless due to its endlessly refracting light captured from within.

In the series of works called *Styks* (2003), various square acrylic rods are intensely pigmented and placed on clear pins before a white matte background. As the rods are layered with color, some translucent, the light bounces around inside and between the jumble of lines, challenging the viewer's perception and resulting in after-images floating among the solid shapes. *Lightlines* (2003), where a line of uniform and luminous matte slabs slouches against a cable of light that is stretched across the length of the gallery, plays again with color interaction and the impression of infinite possibilities. In *HB UH-OH* (2003), white rectangles placed precisely on the floor, provoke another situation where the eye mixes and creates color where none really exists.

Again, it is the mysterious atmospheric shifts of color and sense of an almost ephemeral magic, combined with the humor inherent in the gesture, that make the works more than pure sculpture. The artist rather evokes the feeling of a world that is seldom glimpsed—just outside our perception—which engages all our being in pure enjoyment, experience and energy.

Wellington received her sculpture degree from The Philadelphia College of Art (now The University of the Arts) in 1971, having studied under influential teachers such as Ed McGowan, Dennis Leon and Charles Kaprelian, respective pioneers in color field painting, poetic installations and kinetic sculptures. Influenced by spiritual masters and Eastern philosophy, the artist soon developed her own process of art making, neither limited by genre nor medium. Since 1995, galleries and institutions have exhibited her sculptures, paintings and prints in Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver BC, and Washington DC amongst others. Born in Washington DC, Wellington later lived in California for 10 years and has been a resident of New Hampshire for the past 20 years.