

**THE 51<sup>st</sup> CARNEGIE  
INTERNATIONAL**

**TAKING STOCK**

**By James Yood**

*Detail from 5 page review:*

**But if the Carnegie Prize this time was to devolve into a Lifetime Achievement Award, then a recognition of John Cage might well have been in order. The installation this artist made for the Mattress Factory is perhaps the most intriguing in the entire International, one fully exploiting the potentialities of its site, and elliptically both extolling, undermining, and refracting the experience of visiting an exhibition. Cage's theme was to make an installation that was fluid rather than static, that changed its appearance and silhouette each and everyday. Cage and his chosen collaborators – Dove Bradshaw, Mary Jean Kenton, and Marsha Skinner – each contributed 12 works of art, 15 of which were randomly installed each day on the fourth floor of the Mattress Factory by the employ of chance computer operations. A group of chairs was likewise dispersed throughout the space, usually in no easy relationship with the works on the walls. There was no constancy, except the constancy of change, no gesture toward completeness, except the completeness of each moment; indeed, there was no need for viewers at all, except for the great pleasure of witnessing this**

**piece. There was, as there has been throughout Cage's work, a kind of faith, a poetry that can transcend discourse but not consciousness.**

**(May I make a brief digression here?**

**It is wonderful to see Cage in this International, and it is hoped that it will mark a correction to how the art world usually treats him. There has been a kind of prejudice against Cage as a visual artist, although he has made visual art for much of his life; the art world does not like cross-cultural figures, particularly when, like Cage, they are best known for their work in another discipline, when their visual art might be more than a sideline. Cage's drawings, prints and installations are so wonderful as to belie that observation, and there is little doubt that he is one of the key artists of the century. As soon as he performs the art-historically correct act of dying he will be recognized as such and I would argue that within a generation then he, like Duchamp, will be totally lionized after being totally neglected, and that as time passes the work of his more visually active disciples and acolytes such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg might begin to appear to recede in significance.)**